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## ENGLISH SOCIAL SERVICES

*By the same Author*

**THE GROWTH OF THE BRITISH CIVIL SERVICE**

# ENGLISH. SOCIAL SERVICES

METHODS AND GROWTH

by

EMMELINE W. COHEN

London

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“ Social scientists are committed to the belief that the problems which confront them are to be solved, if at all, by judicious and systematic observation, verification, classification, and interpretation of social phenomena. This approach in its most rigorous and successful form is broadly designated as the scientific method. . . . The degree to which the scientific approach to social problems has penetrated our generation (which is frequently called a ‘ scientific age ’) is perhaps greatly exaggerated.”

GEORGE A. LUNDBERG

“ For forms of government let fools contest ;  
Whate’er is best administered is best :  
For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight ;  
He can’t be wrong whose life is in the right :  
In faith and hope the world will disagree,  
But all mankind’s concern is charity.”

POPE *Essay on Man*



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I should also like to record my gratitude to Mrs. Helena Reid, who first encouraged me to embark on this study.





## PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to consider the growth of social services and of public services directed to promoting personal welfare. It does not aim to survey all of these services, but rather to examine how certain of them came into being, and the relationship between voluntary and public effort in their promotion and conduct.

Awareness of social needs and preparedness to meet them vary in degree considerably from period to period. Effective action requires integration between available knowledge, administration, and public will to action. Where these three factors have operated together, constructive services have emerged. As the social structure changes and knowledge becomes more exact, the need arises for dealing in new ways with old problems ; consequently any form of social administration requires flexibility, and arrangements that will ensure that the findings of relevant branches of specialized knowledge are brought to bear on current problems without the waste of a long time-lag. Institutions, like individuals, run the risk of losing their adaptability as they grow old. When this happens, those who control them continue to think in the idiom of a past age, to reject or condemn contemporary ideas. Yet senescence need not be associated with senility. Most of the services and institutions studied in the following pages retained their vigour, sometimes on account of the vigour of individuals associated with them, sometimes on account of sound administrative arrangements, which helped them to avoid drifting into mental or social backwaters.

To the author, controversy over the relative merits of voluntary or public services appears sterile. The best way to perform a task depends on the nature of the thing to be done ;

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A method suited to one job may be unsuited to another ; a method suitable at one stage of development, with a given amount of available knowledge, may be unsuitable in changed conditions. Neither a private nor a public service is good in itself ; it should be judged by its purpose and by its power adequately to fulfil its purpose. The services I have chosen for discussion are mainly those in which there has been fruitful partnership between private invention and public administration.

The growth of democratic institutions and practices has significance in spheres of social service. The heyday of private provision was an era in which society was more rigidly stratified than it is to-day, one in which participation in active social work was restricted predominantly to the middle and upper strata, when these services were strictly differential, and status prescribed the quality and nature of provision. Local authorities are now responsible for the administration of a large number of services ; the extension of their functions has spread the scope for social service and social improvisation. Nevertheless public awareness of particular needs and appreciation of suitable ways of supplying them frequently lags behind that of individuals or groups of individuals. Thought and improvisation by forward-looking individuals and groups can do much to stimulate and enrich provision. As the following pages will show, my bias is in favour of flexibility in methods and variety in kind, in order that the ends in view may be well and effectively gained.

*New York, 1947.*

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**PART ONE**  
**INTRODUCTORY**



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Want, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness are called by Sir William Beveridge the five giants on the road to reconstruction. We are confident to-day that if we sling our stones accurately we can rid ourselves of these Goliaths. This confidence distinguishes us from our predecessors who, though they aimed numerous missiles at the giants, considered many of them to be immortal ; it is bred of the knowledge that we can analyse the causes and experiment with cures with the backing of the machinery and finance at the command of the state. The task will not be simple, for looking at the giants closely it is clear that each is really a colony. The ignorant include those capable and those incapable of profiting from available forms of education, the idle, the involuntarily unemployed and the unemployable, and so forth. Stones of uniform weight and shape will not kill all members of the colony. As each problem is better understood need for fresh provisions appears. Hence there is need for constant improvisation and for flexible machinery.

Social services directed to improving the personal and environmental conditions of those dominated by the giants and their near relations have not come into existence through the demand of the consumer. Most people need a small dose of education before they realise that they want more. Historically it has been the outside observer, whether private citizen or public officer, who has perceived the need. In England most movements for the improvement of social conditions sprang from the efforts of private citizens. Sometimes they provided services or institutions themselves, like those who founded the first reformatories, sometimes they pressed for government action, like the sanitary reformers. Creation of a service is



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only one part of the task. Institutions and services often fail to keep pace with changing standards and expanding knowledge. Constant vigilance is necessary to prevent them atrophying. Sometimes this vigilance is exercised by interested members of the public, and often by public officers. Where authority has been given to an inspectorate need for changes in law is often suggested in their reports, as in 1886 when the report of the inspectors of education drew attention to the need for special provisions for blind children.

The scope of the social services is constantly widening. Public authorities are to-day administering and grant-aiding constructive services which aim at enriching experience as well as mitigating social problems. One result of this widening of scope is that the term "social service" can be given no accurate definition. In 1937 P.E.P. found it impossible to agree upon what constituted a public social service, and for the purpose of their report restricted the meaning to "those services, provided or financially assisted by the public authorities, which have as their object the enhancement of the personal welfare of individual citizens."<sup>1</sup> Enhancing personal welfare is almost as vague an expression as social service. Greater precision is desirable; it should be possible to distinguish between the meaning of the three expressions "personal service," "public service," and "social service." A personal service is in essence a private act directed by a person towards another person or group of persons selected at the will of the instigator. An act of private charity, such as sheltering a stranded traveller, is a personal service. No one has a right to such a service. In contrast a public service is directed towards a group, and is available to all members of that group as of right: thus a public library may be used by all residents within a defined geographical area who are ratepayers or guaranteed by ratepayers, a vaccination service by all those who require it, and so on. A social service stands somewhere between a personal service and a public service. It is a differential service, in that it is normally directed to

<sup>1</sup> P.E.P. *Report on the British Social Services* (1937), p. 10.

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restricted groups of persons and is not available unconditionally to all. The aim of social services has been to correct social disequilibriums between individuals, groups, or classes, to re-orientate individuals or groups who have lost the minimum conditions of living in the particular pattern of the society to which they belong; they act therefore as forms of social adjustment. In the nineteenth century social services were mainly directed to providing material aid on a discriminatory basis: status and means were all important, thus for instance the education provided for pauper children was different from that provided for other working-class children. In due course measures which were more positive in their aim began to be introduced, yet these also failed to attain universality. Early social insurance schemes were non-inclusive; many services were free only to those who could qualify on a means test, and status was often as important as condition. The present tendency in some spheres is for social services to become public services, available equally to all citizens as of right, for condition to be more important than income or status. The time is passing when the term "social service" accurately describes provision rendered only to those in some sort of trouble. To-day young people are provided with clubs because they are deemed to need recreation, not merely because they are poor; the disabled are rehabilitated on account of their physical handicaps, and vocational guidance is not restricted to those who are difficult to place in employment.<sup>1</sup>

Voluntary social services are distinct from public social services, and the distinction lies in the nature of the activating bodies. In this sphere also time has modified the content of the meaning of the phrase.

In the past, voluntary societies were financed by the subscriptions of interested persons. Officers were sometimes salaried, but more often honorary. The services were often

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Mr James Irving, Reader in Sociology at Rhodes University College, Grahamstown, for the distinctions between the various types of service contained in this paragraph.

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free to those who benefited from them, though occasionally payments were taken, as for example when parents were asked to contribute towards the support of a child in a convalescent home or residential school. Often people in need had to find a patron before they could benefit from a service. The patrons were subscribers who provided "letters," given numbers of which entitled the receiver to a benefit such as a surgical instrument or a place in an orphanage. To-day most voluntary social services employ paid officers, often specially trained for their jobs, and receive payment for services rendered. An increasing number of voluntary bodies seek and receive grants from public authorities, and these grants help materially towards assuring the bodies' financial stability. Thus the 1944 balance-sheet of the National Council of Social Service showed that in that year it received funds from the Ministry of Agriculture for its village-hall work, the Assistance Board for its work in special areas, the Ministry of Health for citizens' advice bureaux, as well as sundry amounts from other public authorities for other purposes. The term "voluntary" to-day relates to management. Voluntary bodies are formed by interested persons for specific purposes and are normally governed by councils or committees which are responsible to themselves alone.

In any field of social service it is not easy to guess whether the main agent will be a statutory or a voluntary body. Often similar services are rendered by statutory and voluntary bodies. An orphan may find himself in a home run by a local authority or in a private orphanage, boarded out by a local authority or adopted through a voluntary body. An indigent old person may be in a small home run by a County Council, in a large institution similarly administered, in a Borough Council's flat for old persons, or in an endowed almshouse for persons from a particular locality or occupation. The contemporary social service pattern is still strongly influenced by historical accidents of origin. Despite the growth of interest in the study of society little attempt has been made to approach the question of the

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proper sphere for different forms of administration of social services with any objectivity. Neither the protagonists of the voluntary principle nor their opponents have made convincing cases for their views. The problem is dominantly administrative, and the test, the quality of the service to the recipient. The solution which may serve one period may be rendered unsuitable for another by changes in attitudes, needs, or conditions. The need for particular services may pass, yet the machinery for supplying them may remain. This is likely to occur where there are ancient endowments, as the Charity Commissioners discovered in the course of exhaustive enquiries in the last century. There is also a tendency for a great many voluntary bodies to spring up to meet very similar needs. Overlapping and multiplication involve waste of resources, and unnecessarily complicate the task of finding out how to get help from an appropriate body. Effective machinery of co-ordination is not easy to devise. Councils of social service do something towards promoting co-operation amongst voluntary bodies, but their scope is necessarily limited and dependent on the good-will of members.

There are no clear principles upon which it is possible to divide services and institutions into those most appropriately administered by voluntary bodies and those most appropriately run by statutory bodies. The state should be satisfied that essential services are available to all on equal terms, wherever they may live. The danger of leaving the administration of national health insurance in the hands of non-statutory bodies is now apparent to nearly everybody. On the other hand the main work of prevention of cruelty to children is left confidently in the competent hands of a voluntary body's inspectors, and to-day no one acquainted with the work done would be likely to suggest that children would be better protected if the functions were taken over by the state. Everything depends on the quality of the service concerned and on its scope.

The relationship between voluntary and statutory bodies is important. The increasing tendency of voluntary bodies to

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solicit financial support from statutory bodies has already been mentioned. How far should statutory bodies require representation on the governing bodies which they support financially? Should there be any form of inspection of social service institutions run by voluntary bodies? Should there be any state control of the objects of charitable endeavour? These questions raise controversial issues which require the consideration of social workers and of administrators. The relationship between statutory and voluntary social services varies considerably from service to service. The history of the services and some account of their development throw some light on the situation to-day.

## CHAPTER II

### PROVISION AT THE OPENING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the opening of the nineteenth century the poor law provided the only nation-wide service for those who had fallen on hard times. Outside the poor law, charitable endowments did something to make provision for those in conditions which had attracted the sympathy of the philanthropic. Some were devoted to such useful purposes as education, almshouses, pensions for old people ; some to purposes which had been rendered unnecessary by changes in conditions or the law, such as liberation of the Barbary captives or provision of shrouds for the bodies of executed prisoners ; some were ill-adapted to a country in the throes of great changes. The total annual income of endowed charities in 1839 was over £1,200,000.<sup>1</sup> The significance of that amount is best understood when it is remembered that the population of England and Wales at that time was 15,357,000 and the expenditure on poor relief £4,406,907.<sup>2</sup> For so large a sum of money the results were practically negligible. The benefits were unevenly spread geographically and most of the endowments were directed to meeting needs in specific parishes in which the benefactors had lived or been interested. In addition to the 28,840 separate endowed charities there were innumerable small voluntary philanthropic societies like the one at Chipping Ongar in Essex which, for a total annual outlay of about twenty-six shillings

<sup>1</sup> *1st Report of the Commissioners for Enquiring into those cases which were investigated, and reported upon, by the Charity Commissioners, but not certified to the Attorney-General.* P.P. 1850, vol. xx, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Webb, S. and B. *English Local Government. English Poor Law History* (1929), Part II, vol. ii, p. 1039.

provided an easy chair, night chair, and rush light contrivance for the use of the sick poor.<sup>1</sup>

There was little appreciation of the nature of common needs. Medicine had not the popular appeal it later achieved. Hospital and medical provision is necessarily dependent on the advance of the medical sciences: it is made either from the desire to provide treatment for the sick poor, or to provide opportunity for clinical study, or for a combination of these reasons. Until the seventeenth century there was no systematic clinical teaching.<sup>2</sup> Many famous British hospitals were founded in the eighteenth century—Guy's in 1724, the Westminster in 1719, St. George's in 1733, the London in 1740, York in 1740, Exeter in 1741. Specialisation also began; the London Lock Hospital for the treatment of venereal diseases was founded in 1740, and with the development of obstetrics, lying-in hospitals were opened. The movement for specialisation became more marked as the nineteenth century advanced. Hospitals were not free and open. They were for special areas and patients required special qualifications. It was usual to require a governor's letter or a deposit of 19/6 for burial fees. Without the requisite qualifications a patient could die on the door-step. This is said to have happened in 1828 outside Bart's and to have led to the establishment of a dispensary for the poor in Hatton Garden.<sup>3</sup> These kind of occurrences led to the founding of the Royal Free Hospital to which patients were admitted without letter.

Those sick poor who were fortunate enough to get into hospital were without the auxiliary services that they needed. At first there was no means of getting them surgical aids nor of meeting any of the inevitable expenses which crop up on discharge. The Samaritan Society was founded in 1791 in connection with the London Hospital, and in 1786 a society

<sup>1</sup> *Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor* (1805), vol. iv, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Singer, Charles. *A Short History of Medicine* (1928), p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Evans, A. Delbert, and Howard, L. G. Redmond. *The Romance of the British Voluntary Hospital Movement* (1930), p. 93.

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with the formidable title of National Truss and Surgical Appliances Society was founded, but beneficiaries required subscribers' letters. Those who did not get into hospital had to rely on a dispensary. Dispensaries grew up in great numbers and in the early nineteenth century there were as many as 50,000.<sup>1</sup> They provided medicines at low prices. Medical provision was inadequate in quantity and quality; improvement did not occur until medical science, the movement for sanitary reform, and humanitarianism brought the question more urgently before the public.

If it was unfortunate to be poor and physically ill, it was even worse to suffer from insanity, whatever your income. The insane were grossly treated. "The enormities existing in Asylums, public as well as private, previously to the Parliamentary investigations of 1815, 1816, and 1827, can scarcely be exaggerated. They comprise almost every species of cruelty, insult and neglect, to which helpless and friendless people can be exposed, when abandoned to the charge of ignorant, idle, and ferocious keepers, acting without conscience or control," stated a Royal Commission in 1847.<sup>2</sup> Patients were chained, sometimes for years on end like galley slaves, and herded together in small rooms. There was no protection against unjustifiable confinement, and for many years the public was utterly indifferent to the fate of lunatics. The subject aroused no interest until George III went off his head;<sup>3</sup> even that august personage was subjected to mechanical restraint (as chaining was discreetly described).

An Act of 1744 permitted two Justices of the Peace to have the lunatic poor apprehended, locked up, and chained. The measure was designed to protect other people and referred to those who were "so far disordered in their senses that they

<sup>1</sup> Gray, B. Kirkman. *A History of English Philanthropy* (1905), p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on Lunacy*. P.P. 1847-8, vol. xxxii, p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> Tuke, D. H. *Chapters in the History of the Insane in the British Isles* (1882), p. 107.



may be dangerous to be permitted to go abroad.”<sup>1</sup> That the insane might themselves need protection did not occur to the public-spirited. The well-to-do in private madhouses fared little better than the paupers, although a committee of the House of Commons found in 1763 that some form of legislation was necessary, and an ineffective form of licensing was introduced. The medical profession as a whole was uninterested in lunacy. Bedlam was still as depicted by Hogarth in “The Rake’s Progress,” and people found amusement in visiting it just as they did Newgate. The change in attitude came about slowly. The efforts of interested individuals demonstrated the possibility of using more humane methods. Protection called for state supervision and careful amendment of the laws, and successful reform for co-operation between the state and individuals interested in the care of the insane.

The special needs of children had hardly been recognized. There were no special hospitals for them, no provision for convalescence. The care of the child was still considered to be essentially the concern of the parent. The first deficiency to be recognized at all generally was provision for salvation. Protestantism, it has been observed, is a book religion which requires that its adherents shall be able to read.<sup>2</sup> The evangelical movement at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries made those touched by it aware of the illiteracy of the masses. Robert Raikes, a local journalist, is credited with founding the first Sunday school in Gloucester in 1740. Children were taught to read and to repeat the catechism. Raikes was a humanist and his work stimulated his interest in children. “I cannot express to you the pleasure I often receive in discovering genius and innate good dispositions among this little multitude. It is botanizing human nature,” he said in a letter to Colonel Townley.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately it took many years

<sup>1</sup> 17 Geo. 2 c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Halévy, E. *A History of the English People in 1815* (1938 : Pelican edition), vol. i, bk. 3, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Mary Carpenter. *Reformatory Schools, for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders* (1851), p. 114.

before this natural-history attitude to children became at all general. The few scattered individuals who interested themselves in the study of children and assessment of their social needs were ahead of their time. Meanwhile Sunday schools sprang up all over the country, some organised by men like John POUND, the crippled bootmaker of Portsmouth, some by the wealthy persons of the parish. The quality of the teaching in the schools varied considerably. Although it may be true that the educational value of most of the schools was slight<sup>1</sup> it is important not to underestimate their indirect value. Sometimes the promoters were energetic people who perceived the need for more general education. Such for example was Hannah More (1775-1833) who after a successful and profitable career as a writer of popular verse and drama was touched by the evangelical movement when she was middle-aged, and set about founding and organising schools. She retained her love of writing and it is possible to get a vivid idea of her work from her voluminous published correspondence. Her first venture was at Cheddar, a parish of 2,000 which in 1789 had had no resident clergyman for forty years. She described it as a place with a few farmers, a multitude of poor, and no gentry. Before starting a school she and her sisters undertook what we should call to-day a social survey of the village. They visited each home, "picking up at one house (like fortune-tellers) the name and character of the next."<sup>2</sup> They took notes of the numbers in each family, wages, employment, and character, and found the results so useful that they used this method in the nine other parishes with which they were concerned. All women with children over the age of six were then asked to meet them on a fixed day. At first the parishioners were suspicious of the proposal to open a school. "A great many refused to send their children, unless we would pay them for it ! and not a few refused, because they were not

<sup>1</sup> Gray, E. Kirkman. *A History of English Philanthropy* (1905), p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts, William. *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More*, 3rd edition (1835), vol. ii, p. 295.

sure of my intentions, being apprehensive that at the end of seven years, if they attended so long, I should acquire a power over them, and send them beyond sea.”<sup>1</sup> Undeterred by this lukewarm reception the Misses More engaged a widow who had a private income of £40 a year and a daughter of twenty-five “of superior capacity,” paying them a joint salary of £30 a year. The curriculum was reading, sewing and knitting, and the annual cost £99. Those who completed the course were rewarded when they married by a gift of five shillings, a pair of white stockings, and a new Bible. There was a club attached to the school. The widow and daughter visited the sick to look after their spiritual welfare. The object of the schools, Miss More explained to the Bishop of Bath in a letter in 1801, was “not to make fanatics, but to train up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety.”<sup>2</sup> Even so, Miss More was accused by the orthodox of methodism, and by the farmers of wishing to make ploughmen wiser than their masters. There was also a danger that those taught to read in Sunday and charity schools would fail to confine their attention to the Bible and would read the innumerable radical and atheistic tracts published at the time. To mitigate the danger Hannah More wrote a series of stories in which there was always an exemplary parish priest, ballads and other tracts, publications which it is claimed had a circulation of two million.<sup>3</sup>

The More sisters undoubtedly pursued their limited educational aims with exceptional thoroughness and intelligence. Surviving records give no grounds for belief that most of the charity schools were so well run. They were often very small, like the Tarporley Charity in Chester, for which the parish officers acted as governors, which had an annual income of £4 10s. applied to having four poor children taught to read in a dame’s school.<sup>4</sup> The typical charity school was small, local,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 296. Letter to William Wilberforce dated 1791.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. iii, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii, p. 424.

<sup>4</sup> *Return of Charities to be distributed to the Poor.* P.P. 1843, vol. xviii, p. 730.

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inexpensive, and directed to educating children for the status into which they had been born. In many the children were employed on such simple tasks as spinning or plaiting, and the products of their labour were sold. Often economic aims outweighed educational aims. A good charity school was an accident due to a good teacher and interested governors.

There was one other provision for the education of the poor, the endowed schools. Numbers of these were described by the Commissioners who inquired into charities in the early years of the century. Some of the foundations were ancient, most of them small and the benefits limited to residents in particular parishes. Many had fallen into decay, some were abused, and others were impeded by the expense and difficulty involved in altering the conditions stipulated in the instruments of endowment. In the absence of any machinery for inspection there was no check on wasted endowments. The Corporation of Coventry, for example, acted as trustee for a grammar school which had once served the district well. When the Commissioners visited it they found a headmaster aged eighty-two who had become incapable, and an undermaster little younger. There were no pupils in the upper school and only one in the lower. The Commissioners suggested that the headmaster should be pensioned off and the Corporation agreed, but when they came to look into the situation more carefully they discovered that an Act of Parliament had tied the headship of the school to the rectorship of a Coventry church, and they had no power to deprive a rector of his living. Their embarrassment was relieved by the old man's death. They then appointed an energetic successor to resuscitate the school. He was considerably hampered by the ancient undermaster who, though incapable, refused to retire.<sup>1</sup>

Private persons could endow and set up schools in particular localities but they could not ensure that provision was adequate in quantity or quality, nor so devise the instrument of endowment

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on Public Charities.* P.P. 1835, vol. vii, pp. 659-660.

as to prevent abuses from arising. The fight against ignorance had hardly begun. To be effective it required the combined efforts of the state and interested private citizens, an alliance which only began in 1832, when the Estimates contained a sum of £20,000 for public education. There was no separate government office concerned with the administration of grants until 1839, when an office under the Privy Council, called the Committee of the Council on Education, was set up by order in council.

If charity schools and Sunday schools did quantitatively and qualitatively little to educate the ignorant poor, they did something to educate their promoters. Throughout the century many pioneer social workers were first brought into touch with social conditions through voluntary Sunday school work. The inadequacy of the provision and the limited range of children affected by it spurred them to improvise to fill the gaps they found. Vagrant children, delinquent children, and neglected children in due course profited from this experience.

*Survey*

At the opening of the nineteenth century social service was virtually a virgin field. Philanthropists had set up a school here, a dispensary there, but there was no general appreciation of the nature or extent of social needs nor technique for assessing them. The reform of public offices had only just begun and the device of inspection was not yet invented. The creation of adequate social services requires interested individuals, adequate machinery, and knowledge. There were a few interested pioneers, inadequate administrative machinery, and little knowledge. The science of statistics, which is basic to social studies, was in its infancy. Statistics in the modern sense of the word did not come into existence until the publication by a Prussian clergyman called Süssmilch in 1761 of a book called "Die gottliche Ordnung in den Veränderungen des menschlichen Geschlechts aus der Geburt, dem Tode, und der Fortpflanzung desselben erwiesen" in which he tried to form a general theory of society based on arithmetical premises. His work was followed by that of a great Belgian, Quetelet, and as a result of the impulse given by him, the Statistical Society of London was founded. In the absence of statistics there was no social arithmetic. There was no social medicine and society had not become a phenomenon for objective study. The changing social structure made old methods become obsolete rapidly. Everything remained to be done.



PART TWO

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN





## CHAPTER III

### THE PERISHING AND DANGEROUS CLASSES

The way in which children are treated in a society is significant of that society's values. It is therefore appropriate to deal separately and first with the various services which have grown up to meet the special needs of children. Industrial employment and urban living which lead to concentrating people together closely make manifest problems which are easily overlooked in rural communities. Peasants and those engaged in domestic industries often tend to exploit the labour of their own offspring ; rural children break laws, suffer neglect and hunger, are illiterate and insanitary, have too little to eat and too much to do, but these conditions assume a fresh significance when they occur in industrial towns on a large scale, accompanied by the artificial disciplines of industrial life, when the exploitation is exercised by strangers, when the environment offers contrasts of opulence and indigence, hunger and surfeit, labour for great reward and labour for bare existence.

Some services for children have grown out of provision made by philanthropists to meet needs unrecognised by the state, such as alternatives to prison for child law-breakers ; others have developed from the provision of some general service which made apparent supplementary requirements as, for instance, the auxiliary medical services and feeding services which were established after compulsory elementary education gathered the children in schools and their needs became obvious to those responsible for the administration of the Education Acts.

Looking back at the past from the vantage point of the mid-twentieth century, it is remarkable how slowly obvious needs came to be appreciated and how inadequate in quantity

and quality were the services instituted. This was due partly to parsimony, partly to a general insensitiveness to the special needs of children which was manifested most strikingly by the difficulties encountered by those who introduced legislation to safeguard them against economic exploitation, and partly to views about parental responsibility common to the governing classes. Even Lord Shaftesbury was against compulsory education. In his presidential address to the Annual Congress of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, he observed in 1859 that "though in many districts there are schools enough, and teachers enough, very many children are never sent to them, and, except under compulsion of law (which God forbid), never will be."<sup>1</sup> As late as 1887 the Charity Organisation Society came out strongly against the provision of free meals for school children on the grounds that whereas education was provided to make people fitting members of a civilised community, it was plainly the duty of parents to provide for their children. A majority of their committee were of opinion that "it is better in the interests of the community to allow in such cases (where the parents had not made provision) the sins of the parents to be visited on the children than to impair the principle of the solidarity of the family and run the risk of permanently demoralising large numbers of the population by the offer of free meals to their children."<sup>2</sup>

Breaking down these attitudes took a long time. It is natural therefore that the first services to be provided were not for the benefit of children in general, but for social problem groups whose parents had failed to control them, or whose habits and conditions constituted a danger to social stability.

Large towns abounded with children of the "perishing and dangerous classes," as one of their most distinguished champions, Mary Carpenter (1807-1877), called them. They were neglected,

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1859), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Charity Organisation Society. *Charity and Food* (1887), p. 16.

dirty, vagrant, and delinquent. Outside the Poor Law there was no official provision for them until they were convicted of an offence and then, if they were over the age of 7, they were sent to prison where they were accommodated with the adult prisoners. Prisons, despite the work of John Howard (1726-1790), were places to be avoided. His book "The State of the Prisons in England and Wales," published in 1777, had made people alive to the squalor, dirt, degradation, and corrupt management of gaols. The diet was insufficient and those who could afford to supplemented it by having food sent in from outside; there was inadequate separation of the sexes and prisoners slept in crowded dormitories; there was no useful employment and no pretence at any effort to effect reformation. Howard made the legislature aware of the need for change. His work led to a good deal of cleaning up and in particular to the use of whitewash. Some new prisons were built on the cell system and interest in the design of prisons grew. But the old communal gaols survived. There was little spur to improvement until the appointment of Inspectors of Prisons in 1835. Before that date, however, strenuous and enlightened efforts of private citizens who interested themselves in questions of prison discipline and management brought about considerable amelioration in conditions. Pioneer work was done by members of the Society of Friends.

When Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) made her first visit to Newgate in 1813, the officials tried to dissuade her from going into the women's quarters for fear that she would be mobbed. She did not find the insanitary conditions common in Howard's time, but no one was concerned with caring for the prisoners and there was no matron. The women were without occupation and the children without instruction. When she began her regular visits in 1817 she set about remedying these defects. Throughout she explained her purpose to the women and secured their co-operation. After some trouble with the authorities a room was set aside for a school and one of the convicts acted as teacher. The women made patchwork quilts,

for which there was a market in New South Wales, and clothes. A Ladies' Association for the Improvement of Female Prisoners was formed, mostly composed of Friends who helped with the work, raised funds, and collected sewing materials.

Elizabeth Fry could not have carried through her work without the sanction and co-operation of the responsible authorities. Fortunately her husband was in a position to entertain them socially and soon the effect of her work on the behaviour of the prisoners encouraged the governors to concede many of her requests. Hitherto women to be deported had travelled to the ships with their children in open wagons, jeered at as they went by the derisive mob. This degrading performance was stopped. The women travelled in closed coaches, and on the ships Mrs. Fry and her friends helped them to organise themselves and to improvise schools for the children. Transportation was virtually exile for life to a country which took six months to get to, where life was tough and punishment brutal. The days immediately before sailing were tense for the victims. From her first venture until 1843 Mrs. Fry organised every convict ship which left London carrying women prisoners—106 ships and 12,000 convicts came under her hands, no mean achievement for a woman at that time.<sup>1</sup>

It is easy to condemn a system which made this work necessary. The authorities were neither more nor less callous than the public; it is to their credit that they were co-operative. Changes in law were necessary as well as changes in administration. It was through Elizabeth Fry's representations that the Gaol Act of 1823 included a clause which provided that female prisoners should be under officers of their own sex; the provisions

<sup>1</sup> For a full account of this work see Whitney, J. P. *Elizabeth Fry, Quaker Heroine* (1937), p. 223.

Deportation was the normal sentence for men, women, or children convicted of a felony. Until 1715 the usual destination was America. Transportation to Australia began in 1787. The alleged intention was to give deportees a chance to live by honest industry. The scandal of conditions in Australia led to the suspension of the method in 1846 but it was not finally abolished until 1856. Thereafter the British had to deal with malefactors within their own shores.

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of this Act were extended to town and borough gaols in 1837.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the fashionable world, instead of putting ample funds at the disposal of the pioneers, used to go to Newgate to see Mrs. Fry reading the Bible to the convicts ; it was one of the sights of London not to be missed.

At this period sentences were harsh. There was no suggestion that the purpose of punishment should be the reformation of the offender. The death sentence was carried out on men and women alike. There were 150 capital offences in 1818 ; they were reduced to 12 in 1837. In 1820 it was recorded in *The Times* that 27 persons were sentenced to death at the Old Bailey and that none of the offences was murder.<sup>2</sup> Even children were sentenced to death. It was reported that in January 1825 there were four girls under the age of 13 in Newgate and that two of them were under sentence of death.<sup>3</sup>

The plight of child offenders appears to have evoked little interest. The convicted child went to prison, sharing there the degrading conditions of adults. When the first prison inspectors made their visits they found the gaols full of children committed for trifling offences ; there was a boy in Clerkenwell serving a sentence for stealing two buns, another in Coldbath Fields House of Correction convicted of stealing an orange.<sup>4</sup> Nor was it only convicted children who were to be found in gaols. There were no remand homes, so a boy awaiting trial was sent to prison where, as the inspector observed, "if innocent, he is placed in a situation the best calculated to corrupt ; and if guilty, he cannot fail to become still further vitiated and hardened."<sup>5</sup> Acquittal would have been less harmful than imprisonment, for the convicted juvenile "enters the prison a child in years, and not unfrequently also in crime ; but he

<sup>1</sup> Davenport Hill, Rosamond and Florence. *Matthew Davenport Hill—A Memoir* (1878), p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> *Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Gaols and Houses of Correction.* Appendix 16. P.P. 1835, vol. xii, p. 547.

<sup>4</sup> *First Report of the Inspector of Prisons.* P.P. 1836, vol. xxxv, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 92.

leaves it with a knowledge in the ways of wickedness, which it is scarcely possible that he could acquire in any other place.”<sup>1</sup> Deportation, whatever its advantage as a method of disposing of the convict population, was “too dearly purchased by the demoralisation of the juvenile offender”<sup>2</sup> The remedy proposed was a special prison in London for children, in which there should be a House of Correction for the convicted and a separate section for those awaiting trial;<sup>3</sup> it was recommended that arrangements should be made in the country to confine children in places other than the county prison. Here, then, were the officials criticising current practice with the same vigour and insight as the private reformers. Two years after the publication of the first annual report, Parkhurst was established as a separate prison for boys from the age of 8 upwards. They stayed there pending transportation at the age of 15. The regime was that of a prison, with similar discipline and solitary confinement as a form of punishment. Parkhurst stopped the evils contingent on mixing young and old offenders but was unsuccessful as a method of reform. The next step necessary was to get children out of prison altogether and to devise a totally different form of regime for them. This entailed a change in the existing laws, the creation of new forms of institution, and a changed outlook.

Officials could only advocate alterations in practice and make known the defects of the existing system. The philanthropic in the meantime demonstrated possibilities of other methods by their improvisations. In 1788 a small society was formed in London called the Philanthropic Society. Its members were impressed by the large number of vagrant children who roamed about London picking up a precarious living, easy victims to those who wished to teach them to thieve. The Society bought two or three cottages in the then village of Hackney and placed boys in them in groups of twelve with a tradesman—a shoemaker, tailor, or gardener—in charge of each.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 94.

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The aim was to provide something approximating as nearly as possible to an ordinary home.<sup>1</sup> It was a small-scale enterprise which differed from other small charitable homes in its enlightened direction and in the fruits which it bore. From it sprang the reformatory schools which were to supplant prisons for the reception of child offenders. The development was slow. The Society was incorporated in 1806 and carried on its work on a small scale, receiving the children of transported criminals and destitute children. In 1792 it moved from Hackney to St. George's and ran a mixed scheme for boys and girls; it aroused no public interest.

Other private schemes were launched. One which attracted some attention was promoted by the Children's Friend Society. The founder, Captain Brenton, R.N., set out in 1833 to rescue vagrant city children by putting them in asylums, giving them religious instruction, teaching the boys "spade husbandry," and sending them to South Africa. He tried to interest Parliament and the public in his scheme but met with little success beyond persuading the Colonial Office to pay the passages of the first emigrants.<sup>2</sup> At home there was an asylum for boys at Hackney Wick and one for girls at Chiswick. In South Africa the Society relied entirely on the good offices of committees of "respectable inhabitants" who received the children and allocated them to farmers.<sup>3</sup> There was no system of regular visiting and no link other than correspondence between the colonial and home committees. In six years the Society received some 1,200 children and sent over 700 to the Cape. The solution had a strong appeal for the governing classes at a time when population theories led them to believe that England was in danger of being over-populated. In 1839 a Bill was in draft to authorise the multiplication of the schools. Then

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science*. Paper by Alexander Falconer, Governor of the Protestant Reformatory, Belfast (1861), p. 447.

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1861), p. 449.

<sup>3</sup> *Children's Friend Society*, 9th Annual Report, 1839.



there was a scandal. It was alleged that the farmers treated the children with the brutality with which they had treated the recently-emancipated slaves, and underfed and underclothed them. Naturally the reports sent by the colonists did not support the allegations and it was difficult to ascertain the facts. No one in the colonial government was responsible for exercising any supervision. The same year that the allegations were made Captain Brenton died and the Society wound up.

These early efforts were purely *ad hoc* and designed to do something for the small number of children they handled. Their founders were not interested in asking why the growing towns abounded with vagrant children, nor in investigating the background of those committed to prison, nor in the principles of reclamation.

The main benefits of the Sunday school movement became manifest in the eighteen-forties. The movement brought numbers of middle-class men and women into close contact with children who lived in the growing slums of the great cities. Some of these teachers appreciated the significance of what they saw and determined to bring about changes. Ragged schools sprang from Sunday schools. In 1844 William Locke and some of his fellow Sunday school teachers found many children excluded from the Sunday schools "in consequence of their filthy, dirty, and ragged condition" and determined to found special schools for them. The Ragged School Union was formed in 1844 to help those engaged in the work to evolve a common policy. The schools were open in the day and in the evenings for children between the ages of 4 and 16. By 1852 there were one hundred schools with 200 paid and 1,600 voluntary teachers, and 13,000 scholars, excluding Sunday school children; half of them were under the age of 10. Some of the children's parents were convicts, some hawkers. The criterion for admission was destitution. The curriculum included industrial subjects, but unlike the earlier charity schools the products were not sold to the public, but at low prices to the children. In some schools

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food was provided free, and lodging arrangements were organised in connection with others.<sup>1</sup>

Ragged-school work first brought Mary Carpenter into touch with the "perishing and dangerous classes" of Bristol. Daughter of an evangelical Unitarian minister, for some years she helped her mother and sisters run a school for middle-class girls, thereby gaining valuable educational experience. Her deep religious convictions, however, redirected her interests. In 1831 she became a Sunday school teacher. Like Locke and his friends she was impressed by the numbers of children untouched by Sunday schools, and in 1846 she established a ragged school (a term she deplored, preferring Free Day school), which had an average attendance of 160. The School Inspector, who visited her regularly from interest although the school did not qualify for grant, was so impressed by her work that he persuaded her to write about her methods. She published anonymously "Ragged Schools, their Principles and Modes of Operation." Her work aroused her interest in juvenile delinquency and she tackled the problem with singular energy and intelligence, studying the available evidence and experimenting in method. She believed that all children were capable of becoming useful members of society, that the comparatively few exceptions did not invalidate this principle, and that the existing system of committing children to prison for even the most trivial offences was certain to make them members of the criminal classes for life.<sup>2</sup> She considered that there were two main groups of children in need of help; those of the "perishing classes" who had not yet fallen into crime, but would do so from ignorance and destitution unless helped; those of the "dangerous classes" who had already been in prison and "whose hand is against every man, for they know not that any man is their brother."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Evidence of William Locke, Hon. Secretary of the Ragged School Union before the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Juveniles.* P.P. 1852, vol. vii, pp. 315-318.

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter, J. E. *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter* (1879), p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter, Mary. *Reformatory Schools, for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders* (1851), p. 2.

Both came from the section of the population which provided pupils for the ragged schools. It was not their degree of poverty which distinguished them from the "labouring poor" but lack of parental control and lack of effort on the part of parents to provide any form of education for their children.<sup>1</sup> Those who had been convicted needed the same sort of treatment as those who had not, for the only significant difference between them was that one group had been branded by society whilst the other had not.<sup>2</sup>

Her views on the proper treatment of convicted children were even more at variance with those common at the time than was her analysis of the social groups from which such children were drawn. The young offenders she had known had had their full share of violence, having suffered imprisonment and whipping at the direction of the court in the name of justice, and beating from their parents. She made a careful study of the police reports and found it impossible to understand why magistrates should continue to believe in the virtue of methods which were so clearly inefficacious. In her writings and in evidence that she gave before select committees she quoted case after case in support of her views; cases like that of the unfortunate W. T., a nine-year-old charged with stealing a lump of coal "which," as she explained with her gift of apt commentary, "would imply, to most people, a degree of poverty, because coal is not so convenient to steal as other things." On first conviction he was committed to one month's imprisonment and to be once whipped. On the third charge for a similar offence which occurred in the same year he was sent to a House of Correction for two months and sentenced to be severely whipped. The father, who was in regular employment, told the magistrates that he had often tried to reclaim the boy by use of the rod and by chaining him to the bedstead.<sup>3</sup> Something other than violence was needed to stop children such as this

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Juveniles.* P.P. 1852, vol. vii, p. 98, Q. 799.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 103.

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becoming habitual offenders. She disagreed fundamentally with the current theory that punishment should be retributive. "I should not punish the child for his past conduct," she told a Select Committee in 1852, "but rather enable him to make 'retribution,' if such a term is desired, for the injury he had done to society, by placing him in society as a good and excellent subject."<sup>1</sup> Children could only be reformed by enlisting their "will." In prison their will was broken and she found that those who were most recalcitrant in prison were often the most promising. These views she sustained with countless examples from her experience in Bristol.

Such opinions were not commonly held at the time. In some areas, however, magistrates were aware of the evils of the system they had to administer. In 1818 the Warwickshire magistrates set up a reformatory at Stretton-in-Dunsmow to which they sent boys convicted of offences. The place was shut when in 1838 Parkhurst opened. The difficulty of sending children to voluntary homes was that at the time they were not recognized by law and therefore the superintendents had no legal power of detention. All the reformers agreed that re-education needed up to three years and any sojourn for a short period was useless. Three things were needed; a change in the laws relating to juvenile offenders, the creation of suitable schools for their reception, and measures to stop as many as possible of the "perishing classes" joining the "dangerous classes." The successful accomplishment of these ends needed the combined efforts of lawyers, practical field workers, and officials. In the forties a movement began to form with these ends in view.

### *Reformatory and Industrial School Movement*

Miss Carpenter's observations in Bristol were supplemented by those of Matthew Davenport Hill (1792-1872), a barrister who became Recorder of Birmingham. When children were brought before him he adopted the practice of the Warwickshire

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 104.

magistrates with first offenders, and returned them to the care of their masters ; but he carried this a step further, improvising an embryo probation system. He had enquiries made about the suitability of those who were to act as guardians and he got the police to make periodical calls to see how the children were getting on. He treated second offences severely. In acting in this manner he and his fellow magistrates were without the support of the law, and Hill began to study the question of law reform. In 1851 he made the acquaintance of Miss Carpenter.

England was not the only country to be troubled by the question of the proper treatment of juvenile delinquents. Experiments had been made in the treatment of young offenders by pioneers in Germany and France. The French agricultural colony at Mettray had considerable influence on the development of reformatories in England. In France offenders under the age of sixteen were said to be *sans discernement*, or unable fully to appreciate the social consequences of their acts. They were not necessarily sent to prison, but could be committed to a place of detention. In 1839 M. Demetz, having visited the Philanthropic Society's school in England and a reformatory for boys in Germany, set up Mettray as a colony which ran on the principle of employing the boys on the land—their work was hard and life tough—and of putting them up in small houses under masters who shared their life and activities. At the end of their time at Mettray jobs were found for them and their after care was supervised. The scheme, which received a state subsidy, was successful in that a high proportion of the boys were not charged again ; success was claimed in over 85 per cent. of the cases. The colony was visited by people from all over the world including Englishmen. One of the visitors, the Rev. Sydney Turner, was the superintendent of the Philanthropic Society's school. He perceived the possibility of adapting the French method of discipline and the "family system" to English needs, and in due course transformed the Philanthropic Society's school, which moved in 1848 to Redhill, where to this day it carries on pioneer work.

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In the Home Office also there were people who were aware of and interested in reformatories. The Secretary of State approached the Philanthropic Society in 1843 with an offer of a Treasury grant if they would run a large reformatory. On Turner's advice the offer was rejected. He felt that the Society needed complete freedom to experiment in methods best suited to their purpose.<sup>1</sup> Miss Carpenter also considered that in 1852 it was not the time for the government to run reformatories since no two people agreed how they should best be conducted.<sup>2</sup> In due course Sydney Turner was able to bring to the public service the best experience of private institutions, for he became Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools in 1857, retaining the post until 1876.

Eventually the small body of interested persons impressed some members of Parliament with the need for reform. A Select Committee of the House of Lords, which was appointed in 1847, recommended the experimental use of reformatory schools for young offenders. Four years passed without legislative action. It was said that the mind of the public was unprepared for change. But the state of mind of the public did not appear to the reformers to offer a sufficient excuse for the continued suffering of children. "So our present work," wrote Miss Carpenter to a friend, "is to prepare the minds of the public, and excite magistrates and such like to ask for something."<sup>3</sup> She set up a co-educational reformatory at Bristol to demonstrate the practical value of her views; it was later divided and the boys separated from the girls. Her work brought her into touch with Matthew Davenport Hill and his friends. This association led to a conference in Birmingham the object of which was to agree the essential points required in any reform of the law, and to impress the public with the urgency

<sup>1</sup> *19th Annual Report of the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1876, vol. xxxiv, p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Juveniles.* P.P. 1852, vol. vii, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter, J. E. *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter.* Letter dated August 1851 (1879), p. 153.

of the matter. Conferences of this kind were unusual. In deference to the gentlemen's views of the functions of the weaker sex, none of the women present spoke. The conference led to the appointment of yet another Select Committee, and in 1854 the Reformatory Schools Act was passed. This Act with minor amendments was consolidated into the Reformatory Schools Act of 1866<sup>1</sup> which established the legislative foundation that remained unchanged until 1908. Voluntary reformatories could apply for certification. This involved inspection by a government department. Children between the ages of ten and sixteen could be committed to certified reformatories for periods of not less than two and not more than five years. The Act also outlined the basis of grant aid from Treasury grant and from the prison authorities. Thus at last the legislature had taken the first step towards treating children as children. The reformatories were intended to be like schools rather than prisons, and the period of committal long enough to allow education. There were important differences between the British and continental systems. In Britain the legislature was not prepared to accept the principle that children should be excluded from prison. They had to spend fourteen days in prison before passing to a reformatory. The retributive theory of punishment was strongly held. It was argued that a crime committed involved sin, and that sin must be expiated by suffering inflicted as a retribution.<sup>2</sup> This provision was not abolished until 1899.<sup>3</sup> Financial contributions not exceeding 5/- a week were required from the parents or legal guardians, a clause which reflected current views of parental responsibility. Although the sums received were trifling the authorities for many years set store on their collection and proceeded against those who failed to pay.<sup>4</sup> All reformatories in England were managed

<sup>1</sup> 29 & 30 Vic. c. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Davenport Hill, R. and F. *Matthew Davenport Hill—A Memoir*, (1878), p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> Reformatory Schools Act, 1899, 62 & 63 Vic. c. 12.

<sup>4</sup> In 1861 £2,439 was collected for 4,827 inmates, in 1875 £18,044 for 17,391. *19th Annual Report of the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools*. P.P. 1876, vol. xxxiv, p. 477.

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by voluntary bodies and all those receiving children committed by the court were inspected by the government.

Provision of reformatory schools met only a part of the need perceived by those working amongst children. They wished to see also schools for begging and vagrant children who could not be induced to attend voluntary schools, and free day schools for children who, though not vagrant, would not attend the National or British schools. The need for special provision for destitute children arose partly as a result of the deficiencies of the Poor Law schools. Random examination of Inspectors' reports show that a great many of these were badly run. At Northlade Union the education of both boys and girls was in the hands of an old inefficient schoolmistress who taught reading and writing exclusively from the catechism; education was "very deficient and ill provided for." At Headington Union the boys were taught by the porter who could not teach arithmetic; girls were taught neither reading nor arithmetic. Manchester provided good buildings and poor education.<sup>1</sup> Miss Carpenter failed to persuade the Bristol Union schoolmaster to accept an orphan just discharged from prison; he told her that if all boys about the streets were taken in they would soon have to lay a large rate upon the city.<sup>2</sup> Few Unions followed the example of Luton Union which sent the children to the local National school, teaching only industrial subjects at the workhouse school. Some vagrant children found themselves in prison, like the two Irish children aged nine and fifteen who were imprisoned at Bath for five days for begging.<sup>3</sup>

In Scotland the first industrial school was set up in 1841 by Sheriff Watson. The police took there all children found

<sup>1</sup> *Copies of Extracts of all Reports made by Assistant Commissioners to the Poor Law Commissioners, on the Subject of Workhouse Schools.* P.P. 1847, vol. xlix, p. 142 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Juveniles.* P.P. 1852, vol. vii, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter, Mary. *Reformatory Schools, for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes, and for Juvenile Offenders* (1851), p. 217. She was quoting from the Chaplain's memoranda. There were of course countless other examples.



begging. The school was not residential, but meals were provided. The experiment led to a decrease in the number of children in gaols. In England, by a local Act, the Middlesex magistrates set up an industrial school at Feltham for juvenile offenders between the ages of seven and fourteen. In some ways Feltham was more like a junior reformatory than the Scots school, for the children received were sent by the magistrates. In 1857 the first general Act was passed.<sup>1</sup> It was consolidated in 1866.<sup>2</sup>

The Act defined an industrial school as one in which industrial training was provided and in which children were lodged, clothed, and fed, as well as taught. Any person could bring before two Justices or a magistrate a child apparently under fourteen years old who was found begging or receiving alms, wandering, destitute, orphaned, or whose surviving parent was in prison or frequenting the company of habitual thieves, and he might be committed to a school. Parents might charge their children with being beyond control; refractory workhouse children might be sent to an industrial school and so might children under twelve charged with an offence punishable by imprisonment or less. No child could be detained above the age of sixteen. Children waiting to go to an industrial school were not sent to prison, but to a workhouse. Schools run by voluntary bodies might apply to be certified. Certification carried with it inspection and grant aid. Thus ended a long and tireless campaign. A partnership between the state and voluntary bodies was founded. The principles established remained virtually unchanged until 1908 and the terms used remained part of the social service vocabulary until 1933, when both industrial schools and reformatories were described in the Children and Young Persons Act as "Approved Schools."

<sup>1</sup> 20 & 21 Vic. c. 48: "An Act to make better provision for the Care and Education of Vagrant, Destitute, and Disorderly Children, and for the extension of Industrial Schools."

<sup>2</sup> 29 & 30 Vic. c. 118.

*The Outcome*

Legislative provision for reformatory and industrial schools provided the skeleton on which voluntary and statutory bodies had to build. The product depended on the quality of administration and the school managers' interpretation of their task. The annual reports of the inspectors and the evidence given before a select committee in 1884 and an inter-departmental committee in 1896 show how far the aims of the original promoters were realised.

The number of certified reformatories grew slowly. In 1857 there were 34 ; in 1882, 50 ; in 1894, 50. To begin with their operation was local, that is to say admission was confined to young offenders from given districts. Some counties subscribed to institutions in neighbouring counties, thus Oxfordshire subscribed to reformatories in Berkshire and Sussex ; Kent, Somerset and Surrey to Redhill Farm School. There was, therefore, no form of specialisation amongst the schools. The general characteristics of the physical structure of the schools were described in the first report of the inspectors as follows :—  
 “ A single room, about thirty-five feet long and eighteen broad, with walls of plain brick whitened over with lime, floored with tiles or concrete, and warmed by a common stove or open fire place, serves for school room, meal room, and, in wet weather, for work and play room. The dormitories are generally unplastered and ceiled roughly under the rafters of the roof. The yard for exercise and recreation in the play hours is open and unpaved. An outbuilding or shed is fitted with a bath and a trough for washing. No hot air or hot water pipes are found even in the cells of correction ; very few have even the convenience of gas. The children are usually at their work (the boys in the fields, the girls in the school room) by six o'clock. They work about eight hours, and are in school for mental instruction about three hours per day.”<sup>1</sup> The life was not a soft option to prison ; the reference to cells is a grim reminder

<sup>1</sup> *First Report of the Inspector of Reformatory Schools*. P.P. 1857-8, vol. xxix, p. 817.

of the divided views upon the proper treatment of young offenders. Premises are, however, less important than personnel, the qualities of superintendents and their staff, and the competence of committees of management.<sup>1</sup>

Reformatory and industrial schools set out with the initial advantage of zealous staffs of pioneers and with the disadvantage of beginning their work at a time when educational practice was improving and attitudes to the physical and mental needs of children were undergoing rapid change. The forward looking had ample opportunity for experiment; the conservative ran the danger of being left behind.

In their first years of development reformatory and industrial schools became decreasingly like schools: in 1870 the Home Office inspector, Sydney Turner, reported that they were in fact "juvenile houses of correction."<sup>2</sup> The distinction between the two types of institution grew less and less, until in 1896 a cautious departmental committee reported that the only difference remaining was the age of the inmates.<sup>3</sup> This development was fostered by the administrative structure of the voluntary bodies and by statutory arrangements.

In 1861 the Education Department passed the duty of inspecting reformatory and industrial schools to the Home Office, whose first inspector, the Rev. Sydney Turner, was a man of outstanding gifts who had studied continental methods and had been superintendent of one of the best English reformatories. His report reflected his breadth of view and experience. He had served on the governing body of the Reformatory and Refuge Union and was respected and trusted by the voluntary bodies. However as the years passed, and elementary schools improved, and educational thought and practice developed, the disadvantages of entrusting school

<sup>1</sup> These points were stressed equally in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Reformatory and Industrial Schools*, *op. cit.*, and in the 5th *Report on the Work of the Children's Branch of the Home Office* (1938).

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools*. P.P. 1896, vol. xlv, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

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inspection to different departments became apparent. Home Office inspectors visited only those schools which were under the supervision of their department just as education inspectors of the Local Government Board visited only schools for paupers. Divergencies of standard grew up, the effects of which were apparent in the evidence given before the Royal Commission in 1884, when Home Office inspectors pronounced as educationally satisfactory standards which those with experience of ordinary elementary schools described as "lamentably low." To appreciate the full significance of this state of affairs it is necessary to remember that education in public elementary schools was still at a rudimentary stage.

No action followed the Commission's recommendation that inspection for educational purposes should be transferred to the Education Department. In 1906 the Departmental Committee made a similar recommendation, but it was not until yet another Committee<sup>1</sup> had surveyed the schools that, after 1919, Board of Education inspectors visited to advise the Home Office on educational matters, thus facilitating raising the standard of education of the 18,000 children in schools approved by the Home Office to that common in the elementary schools.

The isolation of the schools reacted adversely on staffing, for the teachers suffered considerable disabilities. Not only were they outside superannuation schemes, but they could not acquire the endorsements of their certificates necessary for promotion and recognition should they wish to transfer to public elementary schools. Absence of inspection also debarred the employment of pupil teachers. It is therefore not surprising that but few trained certificated teachers were employed. In 1905, even on Home Office standards, only 40 per cent. of the boys' reformatories were classed as educationally good.<sup>2</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> *Report of Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools, 1913.* P.P. 1913, vol. xxxix, pp. 104 and 110. A minority were in favour of transfer of supervision from the Home Office to the Board of Education.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on the Provision of Funds for Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1906, vol. liv, p. 9.

results could not be attributed only to poor material. Sydney Turner reported in 1876 that it was "difficult to realise when mixing with the inmates of a reformatory, and still more of an industrial school, that they have been collected from the depraved and disorderly classes, which most of them originally belonged to."<sup>1</sup> They compared favourably with the scholars in parochial day schools.

The voluntary bodies did what they could to set their own house in order. In 1856 a body called the Reformatory and Refuge Union was founded. Its primary object was to "reclaim and elevate the neglected and criminal classes, by educating them in the fear of God, and in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures."<sup>2</sup> To promote its aims it kept a classified list of affiliated institutions, ran conferences for governors and matrons, organised an employment registry for staff, and in 1888 inaugurated an annuity and pension fund. The body had its own inspectors on whose reports depended whether or not affiliation of member institutions would be recognized. Finding that teaching was unsystematic, even in scripture, they appointed their first education inspector in 1873; he and his assistants and inspectors tried to keep up the standard of attainment. They examined the children in scriptural knowledge, and in the three R's, and tried to improve the standard of technical instruction. These inspectors however were even more restricted in experience than those employed by the Home Office.

In 1896 the curricula were still much like those common in charity schools in the early years of the century. The children spent often up to eight and a half hours each day in so-called industrial pursuits. The difficulty of raising funds coupled with the low level of grants from statutory authorities tempted managers and staffs to select occupations which yielded the greatest amount of income rather than those which benefitted

<sup>1</sup> *19th Annual Report of the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools*. P.P. 1876, vol. xxxiv, p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> Reformatory and Refuge Union. *Fifty Years' Record of Child-Saving and Reformatory Work* (1906), p. 28.

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the children educationally.<sup>1</sup> In 1884 Commissioners found that in many schools the occupations were wood chopping and match-box making and even oakum picking and hair teasing.<sup>2</sup> Twelve years later a Departmental Committee still found too much wood chopping and nail straightening; in a Glasgow school boys were employed for long hours on nail straightening.<sup>3</sup> Domestic work was the only training provided for girls, whether or not they were suited to it.<sup>4</sup> The proceeds of labour formed an important part of the schools' income, the bulk of the rest being provided by grants from statutory bodies.<sup>5</sup>

As the years went by voluntary subscriptions fell off more and more. In 1911 2·2 per cent. of the total expenditure of reformatories and under 7 per cent. of that of industrial schools was derived from private subscriptions or legacies.<sup>6</sup> By 1923 private subscriptions had almost entirely disappeared.<sup>7</sup>

The public grants had never been enough to enable the schools to become really efficient. The basis was revised in 1919. The public, the Home Office, and the voluntary bodies had realised by then that it was impossible to achieve satisfactory

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Royal Commissioners on Reformatories and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1884, vol. xlv, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1896, vol. xlv, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> In 1905 total receipts for reformatory schools were made up as follows: Treasury allowance, £62,480; County and Borough rates, £26,060; subscriptions and legacies, £2,954; interest on investments, £2,030; payments for voluntary inmates, £63; profits on industrial work including hiring out inmates, £8,409. Payments by parents went to the relief of the Treasury grant. The equivalent figures for industrial schools were: Treasury allowance, £119,536; County and Borough rates, £77,976; Education authorities, £70,713; Parochial authorities, £5,137; subscriptions and legacies, £26,340; voluntary inmates, £2,712; sundry, £4,991; profits from industrial work and hiring out inmates, £18,462. (Fractions of pounds have been omitted.) *Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on the Provision of Funds for Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1906, vol. liv, pp. 8 and 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1913, vol. xxxix, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> *First Report on the Work of the Children's Branch of the Home Office (1923),* p. 51.

results in this difficult work on the cheap. From 1913 onwards the tendencies of previous years were reversed and institutions which in 1906 had been described as houses of correction became residential schools.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the declining public interest in juvenile delinquency was reflected in the difficulties which the voluntary bodies experienced in securing active committees of management. As the early pioneers died off direction often fell into the hands of a few elderly people who were unable to help the superintendents and were frequently out of touch with advances in thought and practice. This may account for the absence of games <sup>1</sup> at a time when educationists were adumbrating the virtues of team games in the training of the young. Although in 1884 and 1906 the use of women managers had been advocated there were still none on any of the reformatories for boys in 1913, none on 4 reformatories for girls, 41 industrial schools for boys or 7 for girls.<sup>2</sup>

Despite all difficulties, successive investigators have upheld the system of dual control and the fashion in which many voluntary schools have used the freedom it has afforded them. The fact that there are 30 schools which are managed by local authorities <sup>3</sup> has given a basis for forming a judgment on the question of whether there are or are not advantages in management by statutory bodies. The opinion has been held that the present system affords a valuable elasticity in a form of service the benefits of which must depend on the qualities inherent in each separate institution.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1896, vol. xlv, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1913, vol. xxxix, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> *5th Report of the Work of the Children's Branch of the Home Office* (1938), p. 48.

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The reformatory and industrial school movement passed through distinct phases ; the first was dominated by the creative genius of a handful of pioneers who demonstrated that their views were practical by founding and running schools, who brought the problems with which they were concerned before the public, devoted themselves to securing the necessary legislation, and paid careful attention to the details of the various Bills. The outcome was somewhat different from their intentions. Mary Carpenter undoubtedly differentiated between the function of reformatories and that of industrial schools, and her views on the nature and needs of children were ahead of those of most of her contemporaries. The drafting of the Acts coupled with the administrative decision to entrust inspection to the Home Office, the department responsible for prisons, rather than to the Education Department, fostered the gradual merging of the two types of institution and their emergence as juvenile houses of correction. Many of the voluntary bodies lost their initial inspiration and declined as the pioneers died. They were hampered by lack of funds and by absence of adequate machinery for bringing them in touch with one another and with developments in thought and practice. By about 1880 the public had lost interest in young offenders. The findings of successive official inquiries were in the main ignored by Parliament, by the school managers, and by the Home Office. Interest revived after the publication of the report of the Departmental Committee in 1913 ; despite the war the recommendations were implemented, largely on account of the energy and interest of the chief inspector. The institutions changed once more, developing from penitentiaries into residential approved schools with educational standards



comparable to those in public elementary schools. The authorities declared that the managers had fully justified their privileged position as voluntary agencies conducting institutions on their own principles on funds provided from public sources. The decline in the twentieth century of the rigid departmentalism characteristic of the nineteenth century facilitated co-operation between the Children's Branch of the Home Office, which was created on the recommendation of the Departmental Committee of 1913, and the Board of Education. The Home Office retains responsibility for inspection of approved schools but the Ministry of Education inspects also. This arrangement is likely to persist while Parliament rejects the proposal put forward in recent years by bodies of people interested in the welfare of children, that there should be one Ministry responsible for all forms of service for children.

The various phases of development illustrate the results which can be achieved by partnership between state and voluntary agencies. Voluntary agencies demonstrated by practical improvisation the benefits to be derived by a new form of service ; they set up schools without waiting for the public or for Parliament to be convinced of the need for revising their views on punishment. Then when the pioneering stage was over, many showed themselves unable to maintain consistently high standards and to keep abreast of the times. The Reformatory and Refuge Union instituted a form of inspection but their officers lacked width of experience, and whilst they could advise, they had no authority to impose standards. The state had to recognize its responsibility to children sent to reformatories and industrial schools, for it was the courts which sent them there, and moreover the institutions were dependent on public funds. Effective inspection depends on the quality of the inspectors, in the same way that the character of the schools depends almost entirely on the quality of the superintendents and their staffs. Whilst those supervising education were without experience of ordinary schools, it is not surprising that standards were allowed to fall and old-fashioned regimes

and obsolete methods of punishment to continue. The history shows the importance of mutual vigilance. Voluntary bodies need supervision to ensure that they carry out their trust properly. On the other hand it is public indifference which allows public authorities to lapse into a rut and ignore for decades the findings of committees of inquiry. In the course of time the significance of the term "voluntary" has changed; it is now restricted to management. Committees of voluntary schools are self-elected, form their own policy, but are financed from public funds. The justification for this arrangement is the opportunity afforded for variety and improvisation in a service in which success depends mainly on the individual qualities of the staff of each institution. It is likely to continue so long as the voluntary bodies concerned retain their sense of pioneering.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HOMELESS, NEGLECTED AND UNTAUGHT

#### *Neglected and Destitute Children*

The development of industrial schools into institutions to which the courts committed children on account of their or their parents' conduct left no provision for those for whom the promoters of the Bills had intended to provide, the neglected and vagrant. The Acts consolidated in 1886 made alternative provision to prisons for delinquent children, the Factory Acts mitigated little by little the grosser of forms of exploitation of child labour, leaving to parents responsibility for keeping their children occupied; yet those who explored the poorer neighbourhoods of the growing cities knew that they contained large numbers of hungry untaught children, many of whom were without settled homes.

It is difficult to ascertain the number of children at various periods who were without schooling of any kind. It was estimated in 1819 that some 650,000 were attending schools of whom 150,000 attended schools founded since 1803.<sup>1</sup> The effects of this education should not be exaggerated. 33·7 per cent. of the male population of England and Wales and 49·5 of the female was illiterate in 1839.<sup>2</sup> In 1873 the percentage of men and women unable to sign their name in the marriage register was 18·8 and 25·4 respectively.<sup>3</sup> In 1861 of 2,500,000 children attending day schools, only 1,100,000 were in schools liable to inspection.

<sup>1</sup> Halévy, E. *A History of the English People in 1815* (1938: Pelican edition), vol. i, bk. 3, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Cole, G. D. H., and Postgate, R. *The Common People, 1746-1938* (1938), p. 302.

<sup>3</sup> Halévy, E. *Op. cit.* Epilogue, 1895-1905 (1939), bk. 2, p. 19.

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Whilst Parliament hesitated to bring in the necessary legislation to provide universal compulsory free education, and educationists fought over the religious issue, philanthropists, though divided on many points, agreed in their desire to see as many children as possible in schools. The work of the Ragged School Union grew rapidly. The Union, which was founded in 1844, was unsectarian but religious. Its schools, run partly by volunteers, partly by uncertificated paid teachers whose main qualifications were zeal and religion,<sup>1</sup> were semi-missionary in character. Teachers and city missionaries went round collecting children of costers, hawkers, stall holders, rag dealers, and others who could not or would not afford the few pence weekly charged by the "pay schools." In parts of London refuges were set up to provide food and lodging for homeless pupils. The curriculum was restricted to scripture, singing, the three R's, and industrial subjects.

Members of the Union disagreed as to its function. Lord Shaftesbury, its most eminent patron, wished it to remain outside official schemes and to retain its voluntary character. William Locke, the Secretary, desired grant-aid and inspection and was therefore prepared to see the schools merged into the national system. Mary Carpenter's approach to the question was characteristic. Her practical experience led her to believe that immediate circumstances required for the time being a variety in provision. In her evidence before the Royal Commission in 1861 she warmly denied that the schools served children with no reputable home. The meaning of "reputable," she asserted, was a question of judgment. Many of the mothers of the children at her own school were working and could not afford fees. The children needed careful handling and the teachers careful selection. She wished to see the schools inspected and grant-aided under regulations which took account of their special function.<sup>2</sup> She considered them to be unsuitable

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Evidence. Report from the Select Committee on the Education of Destitute Children.* P.P. 1861, vol. vii, pp. 404-426.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of Evidence. Select Committee on Criminal and Destitute Juveniles.* P.P. 1852, vol. vii, p. 100.

places for training pupil teachers ; they were an expedient to meet a temporary urgent need. She closed her own school in 1872 since she considered that the Education Act of 1870 made ragged schools virtually superfluous.<sup>1</sup>

The achievements of ragged schools belong more to the history of social work than to education. The problems they met arose out of the social conditions engendered by poverty, by the growth of large industrial towns, and by the conditions in which the children's parents lived and laboured. The education they provided was inferior to that given in elementary schools, and most of their buildings were sub-standard. Like Sunday schools, they were the medium for introducing voluntary workers to the conditions in which their poorer neighbours lived ; thus Dr. Barnardo's first meeting with the kind of children to whose welfare he devoted his life and energies was at a ragged school.

Two results followed from the division of opinion amongst those responsible for directing the policy of the Ragged School Union. The Select Committee of 1861 was content to leave provision for destitute children to the Boards of Guardians, and found that any grant in aid of buildings or teachers' salaries would be merely aid in relief of rates, and as such undesirable. Voluntary provision became inadequate in quantity and uneven in quality. Until 1876, the state recognized no need for special provision. Then the Education Act permitted school authorities to establish day industrial schools of the kind which Mary Carpenter had advocated from the beginning of her study of social conditions. The children who attended were truants who perpetually absented themselves from elementary schools, and voluntary pupils whose parents paid from sixpence a week upwards for their attendance. The education was better than ragged schools had provided. Meals and recreation formed part of the routine ; there was some industrial training, but this

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter, J. E. *The Life and Work of Mary Carpenter* (1879), pp. 390-392.

## THE HOMELESS, NEGLECTED AND UNTAUGHT

was the weakest part of the curriculum.<sup>1</sup> The schools were mostly in the charge of women who tried to make the children as happy as possible.<sup>2</sup> Theirs was constructive work for the offspring of parents described as "careless or neglectful but not bad or disorderly people," whose neglect was frequently the consequence of extreme poverty. The schools were inspected by the Education Department and formed an integral part of the system of public education; they flourished in large cities most oppressed by problems of poverty. In 1896 there were 20 day industrial schools; in 1913, 12; in 1928, 1. The decline in numbers was made possible by the introduction of legislation permitting the provision of school dinners for children in public elementary schools, by the slow decline in extreme want, and by the growth of understanding of the causes of habitual truancy and the development of other methods of dealing with it. The fact that the schools were integrated with the general system of public elementary education prevented the creation of yet another special group working to a lower standard on an inadequate financial basis.

### *Orphaned and Destitute Children*

Before 1834 the Overseers of the Poor, and thereafter the Guardians, were charged with the duty of providing for orphans and the children of parents in receipt of indoor relief. The tightening up of poor-law administration and the rigid application of the workhouse test led to the abomination of the general mixed workhouse in which children associated with destitute and feeble-minded adults and with pauper lunatics, and suffered similar objectionable conditions of aggregation to those in prisons before the establishment of reformatory and industrial schools. The authorities were more concerned with the status of the pauper and with ensuring that his condition was less eligible

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1913, vol. xxxix, pp. 64 and 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 65 and *Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools.* P.P. 1896, vol. xlv, p. 125.

than that of the lowest-paid labourer than with the specific needs of children. The evils which resulted from the policy were not intended by the authorities. Nassau Senior, one of the most prominent members of the Poor Law Commission of 1832, told a Commission in 1862 that he and his fellow commissioners had "never contemplated having the children under the same roof with the adults,"<sup>1</sup> but during the intervening period that which the Commissioners had not contemplated became the normal practice. It took years to get children out of the workhouses. In 1909 there were still three thousand of them in the ordinary wards of general mixed workhouses.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1844 permitted unions to provide district schools for pauper children. Where advantage was taken of this opportunity the tendency was to create large barracks in which the children were massed; some idea of the kind of life they led emerges from the evidence given before a departmental committee in 1896. Florence Davenport Hill, Matthew Davenport Hill's daughter, had considerable experience of large pauper schools. The guardians, their eyes on cutting down expenses, aimed at getting the work of the institutions done through the drudgery of the children. "I used to see children, little things of 10 or 11 years of age," said Miss Hill, "scrubbing the vast corridors and great dormitories. It must have seemed an almost endless task to them, and they must have hated the work."<sup>2</sup> This work was classed as industrial training for girls.

Sections of the more enlightened public protested in vain against the evils of barracks and in 1878 Local Government Board inspectors advocated the use of cottage homes;<sup>3</sup> yet the barracks continued to grow in size and number. Sutton accommodated 15,643 children, Hanwell 1,148, Anerley 900 and Ashford 700. The same fashion prevailed in the provinces.

<sup>1</sup> Webb, S. and B. *English Local Government. English Poor Law History* (1929), Part II, vol. i, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children (Metropolis)*. P.P. 1896, vol. xliii, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

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Boards of Guardians appeared to be more interested in the economics of large-scale enterprise than in the requirements of those for whose care and upbringing they were responsible. The children, cut off from contact with the outside world, dressed in ugly uniforms in which they had no property, without pocket money, and without holidays, received an education inferior to that given in public elementary schools, and spent part of their day working at uneducative industrial tasks. Competent observers held that, age for age, they attained educational standards far below the normal, particularly in those subjects which required vestiges of individual thought, such as the solution of simple arithmetical problems<sup>1</sup> as contrasted with recitation of multiplication tables.

The pauper educational system was as isolated as the pauper child. The Local Government Board worked without co-operation with the Education Department; it had its own schemes for training teachers, issued its own certificates, and produced poor-law school teachers who had no experience in ordinary elementary schools and were ineligible to teach in them. The Board appointed its own school inspectors, who, as the Departmental Committee of 1896 pointed out, "see no other than poor-law establishments, who compare them with one another, and who are necessarily unfamiliar with the state of other elementary schools, and with the changes which are taking place in the system of public instruction outside."<sup>2</sup> Only the smaller unions sent children to the ordinary elementary schools.

Once it had taken root and become systematised, this isolationism was hard to break down. No action followed the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1888 that poor-law schools should be inspected by the Education Department. Departments are often as loath as individuals to surrender any sphere of authority. Although by 1909 Board of Education inspectors had access to poor-law schools in an

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 44 and 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48.



advisory capacity, the teaching service in the schools was still separate and inferior, and Mrs. Webb in the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission protested that a destitution authority was unsuited by nature and function to supervise the upbringing of children of school age. Whatever the improvements in poor-law schools, their existence permitted children to be segregated into a special class by reason of destitution. The administrative arrangement necessary to enable this state of affairs to be terminated, was transfer of responsibility for residential schools for orphaned and destitute children from the Boards of Guardians to the education committees of the local authorities, and this did not take place until the break up of the poor law by the Act of 1929.

Philanthropists quickly appreciated the defects of poor-law schools. Year after year papers were read on the subject before the congresses of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. Institution boys, it was affirmed, took to thieving, and girls to prostitution. Mary Carpenter said that the schools were run on wrong principles. "Children," she said, "ought never to be considered as paupers ; they have committed no act of their own to degrade them," and she asked the conference to consider "how best to train young girls for whose education we are responsible," not what to do with pauper girls. She considered that no girl could develop satisfactorily without a home atmosphere and affection, and that a third-rate home was better than a good school. Nothing in institutional life was a preparation for home-making ; even the cooking and laundry equipment was different. In 1868 Florence Davenport Hill wrote a book called "Children of the State" condemning current training of poor-law children. Dr. Barnardo believed that barrack schools had a peculiarly degrading effect on girls,<sup>1</sup> and abandoned large aggregations in his own homes in favour of cottage homes. The condemnation of current methods contained in the report raised such strong feelings that over a decade after its publication the Parliamentary Secretary to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

## THE HOMELESS, NEGLECTED AND UNTAUGHT

the Local Government Board wrote an official reply to the criticisms.<sup>1</sup> He went to the length of defending barracks as successful training places for girls. No amount of official whitewash could obliterate the established defects of the system.

Not all Boards of Guardians put the children in their care in large institutions. In 1907 half the poor-law children in England and Wales attended public elementary schools.<sup>2</sup> Placing children in foster-homes in which they could grow up in a normal home environment had been practised in England since the sixteenth century, and was expressly authorised by Gilbert's Act of 1782, though the Poor Law Commission's report in 1834 made no reference to it. In Scotland it was a common practice, favoured partly, perhaps, for reasons of economy, but also for its results. An inspector of the poor from Glasgow told the annual congress of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in 1860 that in his area homes were regularly inspected, and that a follow-up of 320 cases showed 92 per cent. success. Philanthropists, keenly aware of the disadvantages of barrack schools, warmly advocated imitation of the Scottish practice. In due course Boards of Guardians became interested, and in 1870 a general order permitted urban unions to board-out beyond their own boundaries. The success of boarding-out depends on the careful selection of foster-homes and of the children being placed in them, and on adequate intelligent supervision. The Local Government Board appreciated the duty of supervision and appointed women to go round inspecting foster-homes for signs of ill-treatment or neglect. Boards of Guardians appointed visiting committees whose members visited foster-parents. By the end of the century some 8,000 children were boarded-out. Children so dealt with had the advantage of attending the ordinary elementary schools. But the system had its dangers. The Webbs found that there was a total absence of official information about the 6,806 children boarded-

<sup>1</sup> *Children under the Poor Law*. A Report to the President of the Local Government Board by Mr. T. J. Macnamara, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board (1908). P.P. 1908, vol. xcii, p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 460.

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out within poor-law unions in 1909.<sup>1</sup> Those boarded-out beyond the boundaries of their union were more carefully supervised. In our own times it was still possible for local authorities to fail to appoint properly-qualified officers to take charge of the difficult duties involved in inspection and selection, and for the Ministry of Health to fail to require the employment of suitable staff.

Philanthropists did not confine their energies to criticism and propaganda. There was a vogue in the middle of the nineteenth century for founding small homes. Many of those for pauper children had the dual object of providing an alternative to the workhouse, and training domestic servants for the benefit of the middle and upper classes. Some homes were certified by the Local Government Board as fit places to receive poor-law children and were inspected yearly by the Board's district inspector who looked into suitability of premises and similar questions. Many Boards of Guardians used these homes; in 1909 there were 22,000 poor-law children in 191 certified homes and 250 in 3 certified training ships.<sup>2</sup> There were also 3,000 children in uncertified homes. In addition to these institutions there were numerous orphanages and homes for children in need of care and supervision. Not all the work was small scale. Dr. Barnardo (1845-1905), after four years' missionary work in the East End amongst destitute children, opened his famous first home for boys in Stepney in 1870. The story of the life and work of this tireless evangelical benevolent autocrat has often been told. In the course of his life he used most methods of training and disposal; barracks, cottage homes, boarding-out, training ships, emigration, and after-care. Before his death sixty thousand boys and girls had passed through the organisation which he directed.<sup>3</sup> Other organisations also came into the field, such as the Church of England Incorporated Society

<sup>1</sup> Webb, S. and B. *The Break-up of the Poor Law: Being Part I of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission (1909)*, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, A. E. *Barnardo of Stepney* (Allen & Unwin, 1943), p. 217.

for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays, which was founded in 1880, now called the Church of England Children's Society.

Large and small voluntary homes, certified and uncertified, still exist in large numbers. The total is still unknown. Until the passing of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, there was no system of registration and many were not inspected by any government department. Section 93 of the Act requires the person in charge of any voluntary home to return annually certain details to the Home Office. By 1938 over a thousand had complied,<sup>1</sup> but numbers were known to be well in excess of registrations.

It is not easy to assess the contribution made by homes large and small to the welfare of destitute children. Miss Hill, writing soon after the spate of small foundations began, and whilst the founders still took an active interest in their direction, spoke highly of the results obtained by small homes, attributing their merits to their size. Even the Webbs, writing in 1909, said that some of the places they happened to visit left nothing to be desired.<sup>2</sup> Clearly the success of homes depends almost entirely on the character of the superintendent and staff. As time went by some of the smaller voluntary bodies were confronted with considerable difficulties. These arose partly from their isolation one from another. The Reformatory and Refuge Union, appreciating the need for co-ordination, invited affiliation, and in 1906 recorded a membership of 449 homes, all but 26 founded since 1856.<sup>3</sup> They arranged conferences for superintendents, and helped to improve conditions of employment. Later it became difficult to raise adequate money to keep the

<sup>1</sup> *5th Report on the Work of the Children's Branch of the Home Office* (1938), p. 104.

A voluntary home is defined in the Act, section 92, as : " Any home or other institution for the boarding, care and maintenance of poor children or young persons, being a home or other institution supported wholly or partly by voluntary contributions."

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> Reformatory and Refuge Union. *Fifty Years' Record of Child-Saving and Reformatory Work* (1906), p. 56.

premises up to standard or provide proper ablutions.<sup>1</sup> Another difficulty was the provision of proper committees of management. The pioneers were not easily replaced and with the development of more avenues of employment for educated women it is often difficult to secure young and enlightened people with enough spare time to devote to the work. Self-elected committees are apt to grow unaware of their own shortcomings, and the backward not to realise that they are out of touch with contemporary ideas and practices. Not many years ago two preventive homes for girls had to be closed which boasted exclusively male committees. In some cases committees only met to appoint staff and left management in the hands of superintendents, who sometimes took on prodigious tasks, like the seventy-year-old matron of a home for girls who never saw the trustees unless she asked them to meet, and herself carried on all the correspondence, begged, received subscriptions, kept the accounts, appointed staff, carried on a laundry business and ran the home, keeping the girls happy and well in her own way.<sup>2</sup> Such arrangements no doubt had their advantages where the superintendent was good and the committee unhelpful, but in the absence of any form of public inspection provided insufficient safeguards. The larger organisations developed training schemes for their workers and are able to keep in touch with the developments in method which arise from time to time as a result of experience and increased knowledge.

Informed persons were aware that the conditions of care and supervision of children deprived of their natural homes were unsatisfactory, and pressed for reform. In March 1945, the government appointed a committee to "inquire into existing methods of providing for children who from loss of parents or from any cause whatever are deprived of a normal home life with their own parents or relatives; and to consider what further measures should be taken to ensure that these children

<sup>1</sup> *5th Report on the Work of the Children's Branch of the Home Office* (1938), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 109.

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are brought up under conditions best calculated to compensate them for the lack of parental care." The report of the Care of Children Committee was published in September 1946, and surveyed in detail existing conditions. Early the following year the government took steps to implement those recommendations which did not call for fresh legislation. Departmental supervision has been concentrated in the Children's Branch of the Home Office, thus overcoming the difficulties which arose from division of responsibility. Special officers have been appointed who are qualified to undertake the duties of inspection, and local authorities have been instructed to appoint children's officers. Thus a foundation has been laid for building a more adequate machinery.

## *Survey*

The responsibility of the community for providing for abandoned and orphaned children had been recognized in England since the sixteenth century. The manner of the discharge of the duty in the nineteenth century was dominated by the prevailing harsh attitudes to those who were poor. The principle of "less eligibility" applied as forcefully to the treatment of children as to that of adults. Status determined treatment. The private conscience was awakened far sooner than the public, and philanthropists, most of them activated by religious impulses, made more humane provision than statutory bodies. Homes and orphanages were established in great numbers, some supported entirely by voluntary subscriptions, others receiving contributions from Boards of Guardians for the maintenance of poor-law children. Absence of co-ordination and of supervision led to extreme variation in standard amongst institutions run by voluntary bodies, and precarious finances led them to offer low salaries which made it difficult for them to be assured of securing good staff, though sometimes they secured admirable work from devoted and overburdened employees.

The central department responsible for supervising the education and upbringing of children differed according to the accident of the child's birth or circumstances. The Local Government Board and later the Ministry of Health, in pursuance of their duties as destitution authorities, supervised the children of destitute parents and deserted children; the Home Office, as prison authority, supervised institutions for delinquent children and those removed from the guardianship of parents considered unsuitable for such reasons as that they kept a disorderly house. This division of authority resulted in

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anomalous situations; thus in 1896 when poor-law schools were not inspected by the Education Department, a destitute child in Barnardo's Ilford cottage homes attended a school which was inspected by the Education Department, grant-aided by it, and conformed with the public elementary school code.<sup>1</sup>

Development was slow. In 1937 there were still 22 poor-law schools, educating 3,364 children; <sup>2</sup> nor had all local authorities made use of the powers given to them in 1929. Local administration of two-thirds of the poor-law schools had been assigned to education committees, acting as agent for the public assistance committees. Care and maintenance, as distinct from education, remained predominantly in the hands of public assistance committees. The education committees of 5 counties and 21 county boroughs had undertaken this work, under the general direction of the public assistance committees.<sup>3</sup> Nor was the spectre of the general mixed workhouse finally laid, for on 1st January 1938 there were still 215 children accommodated in them.<sup>4</sup>

The Education Act 1944 has finally done away with the division of educational responsibility, and changes in the supervision in the care of children deprived of their natural homes have opened a new chapter in child care. Satisfactory as are these developments, more will need to be done in the future. Much more is known to-day about the physical and mental needs of children, but more still needs to be known. We still lack means of co-ordinating and making available to those who need it, existing information about the different methods employed by various bodies in dealing with children of different kinds, and we therefore lack reliable information about results. There

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on the Education and Maintenance of Pauper Children (Metropolis)*. P.P. 1896, vol. xliii, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Education in 1937*, Cmd. 5776, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> *19th Annual Report of the Ministry of Health, 1937-38*, Cmd. 5801, p. 90.



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is need for training courses and refresher courses for staffs employed in both voluntary and publicly supported homes ; there is need for research and for experiment. Despite improvements it is well to bear in mind the principle so forcefully enunciated by Mary Carpenter, that in making provision for children the important thing to remember is their childhood and not their status.

## CHAPTER V

### HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Handicap implies absence of use of one or more of the senses, or absence or impaired use of limbs, conditions which may be the result of injury before, at, or after birth, or to congenital or other causes. Attitudes to those suffering from disability vary considerably from age to age, and from country to country. Of the various disabilities, blindness is that which has evoked most sympathy, for the suffering and inconvenience it entails are easily apparent to the sighted. Blindness, moreover, was a common affliction ; for centuries, throughout Europe, the blind crowded round the doors of churches to beg alms. Deafness has never awakened the same sympathy as blindness, and the deaf have been mocked and neglected. For a long time deaf-mutes were classed as idiots, and considered to be inaccessible to reason. Cripples and deformed persons were not considered in need of special care, and had to fend for themselves ; in the Middle Ages some of those who were endowed with quick wits became the household fools of the rich and noble.

Handicap requires on the one hand prevention, which is dependent on the growth of scientific knowledge, and on the introduction of administrative machinery for bringing the fruits of knowledge into social use ; on the other, the development of suitable means of dealing with the afflicted.

In a rural economy imbecile children obtrude themselves little on the public conscience. The idiot, shambling and grimacing down the village street, is an object of derision to children but little inconvenience to adults. In a simple society, life offers occupations such as herd watching, or driving geese, which are within the capacity of the half-wit ; he is not a total loss from the economic point of view to those responsible for his

upkeep. In urban industrialised societies these problems present a different face.

It is somewhat surprising to find that few active philanthropists appear to have interested themselves in the fate of the handicapped in England in the first half of the nineteenth century. Neither Sunday school teachers nor ragged school teachers commented on the existence of numbers of dull or deficient children, nor did any Barnardo appear to gather together and provide for blind or deaf children. In an age of reform, no groups got together to press the government to make special provision. It was the introduction of compulsory elementary education which brought these questions forcefully to the notice of the authorities and led to inquiry and to legislative provision.

### *Provision before 1870*

Blind and deaf-mute children present society with two distinct problems ; the one is educational or pedagogic and is concerned with finding ways of teaching which compensate for the sensory loss ; the other is economic, and concerned with providing occupational training. Both demand considerable study of the possibilities and limitations of the afflicted.

The intelligence of those born blind, unlike that of deaf-mutes, is easily perceived ; they are articulate, and from the time of Homer to modern times have numbered talented persons amongst them. This makes it the more surprising that little was done to teach the blind before the eighteenth century. Books were written suggesting devices for teaching them to read, but these inspired no experiments. The first school for blind children was founded by Valentin Haüy, a Frenchman who, disgusted at the spectacle of a group of blind persons being exploited for the amusement of the sighted at a Paris fair, determined to find some means of education which would permit them to live independent and honourable lives, and established a school in 1784, which became known as the *Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles* and received state support. There he

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taught his pupils to read from embossed books, music, and handicrafts. He publicised his methods and was instrumental in blind schools being established in Russia and Germany. State patronage ensured the continuance of the school. It was there that Louis Braille (1809-1852) was educated, and later taught. A man of keen intelligence, he studied the existing systems of reading for the blind, and eventually invented an alphabet composed from varying the positions of six dots, a device which not only simplified reading but enabled the blind to write, thereby breaking down still further their isolation from their fellows. The system was soon adapted to serve musical notation.<sup>1</sup>

Since the work of Valentin Haüy and his school had an international reputation, it must have been known to British philanthropists. His books were translated into English, but he appears to have inspired no comparable imitators. The first school for the blind to be established in England was the Liverpool School for the Indigent Blind. Others followed in various parts of the country. They were mostly small institutions with curricula equivalent to those in charity schools, that is to say concentrating on Bible reading and industrial training. There was no direct state aid, although from 1862 the Poor Laws permitted guardians to send children to voluntary institutions and to pay cost of maintenance. Accommodation was limited, and entry often depended on the then common "voting" system.

The neglect of deaf-mutes was, perhaps, more understandable than that of the blind, for as the report of the Committee on Education pointed out in 1898, to teach speech might be thought impossible "if it had not been accomplished, not once, or in a few specially favourable cases, but frequently, and wherever the long course of skilful and expensive instruction necessary has been completed."<sup>2</sup> Until the sixteenth century it was believed

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie, J. M. *Concerning the Blind* (1930), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Committee of Council on Education on Schools for the Blind and Deaf for 1898-9.* P.P. 1899 vol. xxi, p. 332.

that speech was an instinct, not an acquired skill. The first man known to have educated a deaf-mute was Ponce de Leon (1520-1584), who was educated at Salamanca University and then became a Benedictine. His account of his method has been lost. There were other individual efforts, but the apostle of the deaf-mutes was l'Abbé de l'Epée (1712-1790), who became interested in two deaf-mute sisters and experimented successfully in teaching them.<sup>1</sup> De l'Epée had small private means with which he set up a school entirely dedicated to poor pupils whom he taught on a system of signs. He described his method in books which influenced methods of teaching throughout Europe. L'Abbe Sicard succeeded to the direction of the school which was taken over by the government in 1791.

In England the first school for the deaf was founded by Thomas Braidwood (1715-1806), in 1785. He kept his method a secret and took paying pupils. His nephew, Joseph Watson, learnt his method and became the principal of the first English school for the indigent deaf, which opened in the Old Kent Road, London, and was financed through the efforts of a lady whose deaf son had been educated at Braidwood's school.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter other schools were opened, two of them run by Braidwood's relatives. For many years provision was on a small scale and mainly on the sign system. Meanwhile on the continent deaf-mutes were being taught to speak. One of the great pioneers of this method was Friedrich Moritz Hill (1805-1874), a trained teacher who studied under the great educationist Pestalozzi. He worked on the principle that speech should be developed in the deaf child in the same way as nature developed it in the hearing child. His method was used in Rotterdam and was brought to England in 1866 when Baroness Mayer de Rothschild founded the Jews' Deaf and Dumb Home, and appointed a master trained in oral methods. She also promoted the establishment of an undenominational training college for teachers of the deaf on the oral system.

<sup>1</sup> *Les Bienfaiteurs de l'humanité* (Paris, 1856), p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> *Arnold on the Education of the Deaf*. Revised and re-written by A. Farrar (1901), p. 68.

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The Acts which enabled guardians of the poor to send the blind to private institutions enabled them also to deal similarly with the deaf. By 1870 a number of charities had been founded for the benefit of blind and deaf children, but provision was inadequate and there was no public provision outside the poor law.

That the education of the feeble-minded should have been classed in England with that of the blind and deaf-mute is perhaps an indication of the poverty of thought on the subject. Although in the middle ages distinction was drawn between the "born fool" and the lunatic, by the nineteenth century they were classed together. The main spur to interest in this subject was the result of increased knowledge on the laws of heredity and to the ideas put forward by Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) and his followers that the birthrate of the unfit should be checked in order to improve the human breed: they introduced the term "eugenics" to cover this field of study and favoured radical measures which made no appeal to Victorian philanthropists, who were predominantly unscientific in their approach to social problems. In 1860 Dr. David Brodie read a paper before the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in which he pointed out that whereas in Switzerland, France, Prussia, Austria, Piedmont, Denmark, and six States in America the state had charged itself with care and educational training, in Great Britain such action was considered beyond the proper scope of government.<sup>1</sup> A voluntary organisation had been instrumental in establishing Earlswood Home for imbeciles and idiots at Earlswood, but this provision was not for the poor. There was known to be a large pauper class, some of which was accommodated in general mixed workhouses and some in lunatic asylums. The significance of the problem of mental deficiency was not appreciated until there was fairly accurate estimation of the numbers affected and of the relation of this group to the poor, the unemployable and the delinquent.

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1860), p. 411.

*Provision after 1870*

Introduction of compulsory elementary education brought into the schools those who could profit by the normal curriculum and those who could not, and forced upon the authorities the alternative of either excluding special groups of children from the operation of the Education Acts, or making special provision. Some of the larger authorities made attempts to meet the problem. The London School Board admitted blind children to their schools, where they listened to the lessons provided for the sighted; and classes in Braille were provided at special centres. It was more difficult to provide in a makeshift way for the deaf-mutes. The school inspectors reported on their observations in 1886. They found that neither public nor charitable bodies made provision for the partially blind, that in rural areas numbers prevented the creation of local provision and that there was accommodation for only one-third of the deaf-mute children between the ages of five and fifteen in existing institutions in England and Wales.<sup>1</sup> Education authorities were not empowered to pay for the education and maintenance of handicapped children in residential institutions. Philanthropic provision made no claim to be adequate; those who drafted the Education Acts had overlooked the needs of the handicapped. It was necessary to consider how far the conditions laid down for the education of normal children were applicable and what special provision should be made. A Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Edgerton considered these questions and reported in 1889. In forming their judgment they drew upon the experience of those running voluntary institutions and upon the observations of the school inspectors. They recommended that the provisions of the Education Acts should be extended to cover the blind, deaf and dumb, that school authorities should be empowered to pay for the education and maintenance of children in residential schools, that education should continue until the age of sixteen and that a special educational

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind, Deaf, etc., of the United Kingdom.* P.P. 1886, vol. xxv, p. 565.

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code should be drawn up. These recommendations were embodied in the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, which remained the operative Act until the passing of the Education Act of 1921. In large centres of population education authorities soon made use of their powers; they set up special day schools and residential schools and sent children to existing institutions managed by voluntary bodies. From year to year the inspectors were able to report progress. Rural authorities were slower for, as the inspectors pointed out in 1898, a few afflicted children in widely-scattered areas were easily forgotten by school attendance committees; however, the central department did their best to see that statutory obligations were carried out. Once the provision of special forms of education for the handicapped was recognized, advance depended on pedagogic improvements and on the interests of the education authorities. Voluntary schools and residential institutions continued their work under the inspection of the central education department and with the help of grant-aid. Education broke down the isolation of the handicapped, gave them access to the common social heritage which is passed down in language, and enabled them to lead independent or partially independent lives.

### *Mentally Defective Children*

The Education Act of 1870 brought into the schools a certain number of children who were incapable of profiting from the education provided there, children who could not "be properly taught in ordinary elementary schools by ordinary methods."<sup>1</sup> Some decision had to be made as to what should be done with them. In addition to those who found their way into the schools, the workhouses abounded with mental defectives of all ages, whilst others were to be found in asylums for the insane. Consequently mental defectives were the concern of three authorities—the Boards of Guardians, the Asylums Committees

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Defective and Epileptic Children.* P.P. 1898, vol. xxvi, p. 9.



of county, county borough and borough councils, and the Education Authorities. This division of responsibility at a time when inter-departmental co-operation was difficult precluded effective measures for considering and dealing with the problem comprehensively.

Growing awareness that the existence of numbers of mentally defective persons constituted a social problem is reflected in the appointment in 1875 of a special committee of the Charity Organisation Society to consider "The Education and Care of Idiots, Imbeciles and Harmless Lunatics." The Society at that time enjoyed a distinguished membership. The instigator of the inquiry was Sir Charles Trevelyan, a retired and eminent civil servant, who had been responsible in the middle years of the century for reports which led to the complete remodelling of the Civil Service. Associated with him in this work for the C.O.S. was Lord Shaftesbury, a number of medical men with experience of asylums for defectives, and men of public standing. Despite the distinguished membership, the committee was hampered by having access only to published statistics and by lacking powers requisite to permit adequate inquiry. The report drew attention to defects in existing official returns and in particular to the manner in which the Commissioners in Lunacy classed together and without distinction lunatics, idiots, and imbeciles in public asylums. Voluntary charity had established a small number of homes but had proved unequal "to providing a remedial machinery coextensive with the evil."<sup>1</sup> This was an understatement: the figures showed that the number of available places accommodated only 3 per cent. of the number returned in the census of 1871 as idiots or imbeciles and there was every indication that the census return bore little relation to the total. Moreover many existing institutions catered predominantly for the middle classes and for those who obtained admission by securing the votes of subscribers, a system which did not allocate places according to need. The culmination of the

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Charity Organisation Society on the Education and Care of Idiots, Imbeciles and Harmless Lunatics* (1877), p. 11.

efforts of the committee of the Charity Organisation Society was the reception of a large deputation of its more eminent members by the President of the Local Government Board. Speeches were made, compliments exchanged, and there for the time being the matter rested.

Outside philanthropic circles, there was another body interested in problems of mental deficiency—the eugenists. Eugenics was a term invented by Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) to describe plans to improve the inborn qualities of the human race and to check the birthrate of the unfit. Eugenists studied the laws of heredity in plants, animals, and human beings and stressed the importance of genetic factors in mental deficiency. In 1877 in the United States, Robert L. Duglady published his well-known study of the Jukes family, bred from five notorious sisters whose 709 descendants were said to include 180 chronic paupers, 140 habitual criminals, as well as large numbers of other degenerates and social undesirables. The eugenists were insistent on the relation between low intelligence and other social problems; by diminishing the incidence of deficiency by radical methods they sought to reduce the related conditions. "Man is gifted with pity and other kindly feelings," said Galton; "he has also the power of preventing many kinds of suffering. I conceive it to fall well within his province to replace natural selection by other processes that are more merciful and not less effective."<sup>1</sup> Such a philosophy did not commend itself to the kind of person interested in voluntary charity. It is significant of the isolation of philanthropy from contemporary scientific thought that the Charity Organisation Society's committee included no eugenists and that the report made no reference to their theories.

Meanwhile, in the absence of administrative co-ordination, different authorities exercised their separate powers. The Lunacy Act of 1890 permitted local authorities to build asylums for idiots and imbeciles; the Idiots Act of 1886 simplified the procedure for certification of idiots and the procedure for their

<sup>1</sup> Galton, Sir Francis. *Memories of my Life* (1908), p. 323.

admission to special asylums ; the Metropolitan Asylums Board in London and the poor-law authorities in other parts of London were empowered to make special provision for children who were both pauper and deficient. School authorities, meanwhile, had but two courses open to them ; either they had to provide special classes for those children incapable of profiting from the education provided in ordinary classes, or they had to exclude from school those who could not benefit from schooling. Special classes attracted no extra grants and were expensive ; exclusion had to be exercised with care. In London and great cities school attendance officers reported all cases to their committees which gave their decision without medical advice <sup>1</sup> and excluded two in every thousand children of school age ; in country areas officers acted in consultation with a medical practitioner and excluded four in every thousand.<sup>2</sup> The London School Board asked the Education Department for an increased grant in respect of their special classes and to initiate legislation to enable defective and epileptic children to be dealt with on similar lines to those who were blind and deaf. It was this request which led the department to appoint a departmental committee to inquire into the problem of defective and epileptic children.

At the time " defective " was a word without precise meaning. Study of psychological sciences was little advanced, and research still in its early stages. In 1889 Alfred Binet established at the Sorbonne the first psychological laboratory and there worked with his associate, Dr. Thomas Simon, on methods of measuring intelligence. The first tests they devised were not published until 1905, and it was on the results of work of this character that adequate definition and classification depended. The departmental committee appointed by the Education Department was concerned less with such fundamental approaches than with the administrative problem created by the presence of children in elementary schools who could not profit from the

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on Defective and Epileptic Children.* P.P. 1898, vol. xxvi, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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normal instruction provided there and yet were not considered to be ineducable. The need for special provision was substantiated and the Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act 1899 permitted authorities to deal with such children on the same lines as the deaf and the blind, thereby providing an expedient for those authorities who appreciated the need for action.

In due course the philanthropic public became aware of the problem of the feeble-minded. Whereas to begin with efforts had been directed to the establishment of asylums for idiots and the ineducable, towards the end of the century a few homes were founded for training the feeble-minded. One of the earliest was opened in 1889.<sup>1</sup> In 1895 the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-minded was founded. The promoters had become aware of the numbers of feeble-minded girls who found their way into homes for unmarried mothers and similar institutions and hoped to train girls for laundry and domestic work. Many accepted defectives remitted by Boards of Guardians. Such work, however, hardly ruffled the surface of a problem the depth and width of which were unassessed.

The first attempt at adequate survey and analysis began in 1906 with the appointment of a Royal Commission to consider the existing methods of dealing with idiots, epileptics, and feeble-minded persons not certified under the Lunacy Laws, to report on necessary amendments of the law, on methods to be adopted, and on the functions of the Lunacy Commission. The Commissioners spared themselves no pains. Five of them went to the United States of America to study methods and institutions in that country, which was in advance of Britain in practice, whilst medical investigators were appointed to consider technical aspects of the problem. Voluntary effort was represented on the Commission in the person of C. S. Loch, secretary to the Charity Organisation Society.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded.* P.P. 1908, vol. xxxix, p. 347.

The treatment of mentally-handicapped children formed but a small part of this inquiry, which for the first time in Great Britain appreciated the relation of mental defect to other social problems, including chronic pauperism, delinquency, prostitution, and bastardy. It was noted that in the United States the importance of reducing the output of mentally defective children was frankly recognized, and hence the importance of ascertainment was faced. Provision of special schools was supplemented by custodial homes for girls and women of child-bearing age,<sup>1</sup> some of whom were only slightly defective.

Those who managed voluntary homes or societies perceived as clearly as other witnesses that here was a social problem beyond the scope of voluntary effort and that neither society nor deficient persons could be protected without adequate state control. The outcome of the Commission's work was the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, which redefined mental deficiency, charged local education authorities with the duty of ascertainment, constituted county and county borough councils local mental deficiency authorities, and established the Board of Control as the central supervising body. The duty of provision for paupers remained with the Boards of Guardians.

The Act of 1913 allowed considerable progress to be made, although it left many problems unsolved. Educable mental defectives were not necessarily removed from public elementary schools, and those children not notified to the mental deficiency authority received no supervision unless and until they got into trouble. The full use of the Act depended to a large extent on the initiative and interest of local authorities and public awareness of the significance of the problem. A voluntary association was formed in 1913, called The Central Association for Mental Deficiency, to stimulate public opinion, to create local associations for the care of mental defectives, and to co-operate with statutory bodies. This Association, which later changed its name to the Central Association for Mental Welfare in order to include activities directed to the care of border-line

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 137 and 484.

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persons, usefully co-ordinated the activities of those concerned with the problem, and by the organisation of conferences, training courses, and other activities, gave those concerned with dealing with defectives the opportunity of improving their knowledge and pooling their experience.

The next thorough investigation took place after methods of social research and knowledge of the psychological sciences had undergone considerable development. The report of the Mental Deficiency Committee of 1929<sup>1</sup> is a sociological document of fundamental importance. It was shown that the number of deficientes had increased in proportion to the population since 1908 and that 77 per cent. of the children ascertained by the investigation as feeble-minded were in ordinary public elementary schools,<sup>2</sup> and that approximately 7·5 in every thousand children between the ages of 7 and 16 were educable defectives within the meaning of the Education Acts. Clearly the Act of 1913 was not being administered as had been anticipated. It is obvious that the presence of subnormal children in the ordinary schools without special provision is a brake on the efficiency of normal education. More striking was the assessment of the social significance of the general problem, relating mental deficiency to other intractable conditions. "If," commented the Committee, "as there is reason to think, mental deficiency, much physical inefficiency, chronic pauperism, recidivism, are all more or less closely related, and are all parts of a single focal problem, can it be that poor mental endowment, manifesting itself in an incapacity for social adjustment and inability to manage one's own affairs, may be not merely a symptom but rather the chief contributory cause of these kindred social evils?"<sup>3</sup> Their researches in fact tended to substantiate the assumptions of the early eugenisists, and faced society with some crucial if unpalatable social facts.

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Mental Deficiency Committee, 1929*, was the work of a joint Committee of the Board of Education and Board of Control.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Part II, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Part II, p. 83.

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Although certain of the Committee's recommendations have borne fruit in the Education Act of 1944, the main issues raised have not evoked public interest nor borne fruit in legislative or administrative action. The facts revealed necessitate consideration of difficult ethical problems, such as how far different forms of restraint on the liberty of subnormal persons is justifiable. The report makes it clear that the bulk of the defectives are the progeny not of other defectives, but of sections of the population where there was a markedly low physical and mental level. To what policy should such indications point? In the absence of public conscience on such matters the reports of investigations are pigeon-holed.

*Survey*

Provision for handicapped children made slow progress in England and evoked none of the enthusiasm and ingenuity which characterised the efforts made by philanthropists and pioneers in other fields. There appears to have been little appreciation of the extent of the problem, or of the possibilities of mitigating the sufferings of the afflicted children. Effective provision requires a considerable degree of co-operation between administrators, pedagogues, doctors, and parents. Training cannot be provided on the cheap. Teachers of the blind and the deaf require special skills and must give their pupils considerable individual attention. The typical charity school or training home was a small-scale enterprise, staffed by devoted but untrained instructors, or by persons of dubious efficiency, in which technical problems could be ignored without obvious difficulty. This form of organisation would not have been appropriate for schools for the handicapped.

The fact that it was the general policy of Boards of Guardians to grant indoor relief in preference to out-relief, meant that they had to handle a number of destitute handicapped children. It was not, however, until the introduction of compulsory education that statutory bodies were brought up against the handicapped as a specific problem demanding decision and provision, nor until then were there returns which gave any reliable indication of the incidence of handicap. Because of the manner in which the question arose, it was natural that educable mental defectives should have been grouped with other categories of handicapped, and similarly treated from an administrative point of view.

Improvement of provision for handicapped children has depended dominantly on the general progress of public education.



Whereas initially only the grosser forms of difficulty received special treatment, a recent pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Education lists twelve categories for which education authorities should make special provision.<sup>1</sup> This improved differentiation reflects the increased sense of public responsibility for the welfare and education of children as well as the progress of the scientific study of the child. Voluntary institutions persist, but the voluntary movement has not played a dominant part in initiating new types of provision or in meeting the needs of this section of the population.

In addition to the questions of provision and administrative responsibility, handicap of all kinds presents the problem of causation. Much suffering is avoidable suffering and it is clearly both humane and economical to take all possible steps to reduce the incidence of those conditions which require special provision. The growth of scientific knowledge and the availability of adequate statistics have provided the means for radical investigations into social problems. The findings of the inquirers usually demand public action and education of public opinion.

The voluntary movement has shown little interest in radical preventive work. This may be due in part to the difficulty of raising sufficient funds for objects which make little direct sentimental appeal, but the movement must be considered in relation to the sources from which it derives its finances, and it is not without significance that the scientific approach made no appeal. Similarly propaganda has fallen to the lot of official bodies. The first nation-wide campaign to bring home to the general public that there is a relation between blindness in babies and untreated venereal diseases in their parents was launched by the Ministry of Health during the second world war. The education of public opinion now depends to a large extent on government publicity. It is essential that it should not be neglected, for responsible authorities move at the speed dictated by their elected representatives. The report of the

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, Pamphlet No. 5. *Special Educational Treatment* (1946).

## HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Mental Deficiency Committee of 1929 embodied a great deal of research and raised issues which deserve attention from those concerned with most aspects of social problems. The recommendations bearing on the education of subnormal children have borne fruit in the Education Act of 1944, but it is doubtful whether the sociological issues raised have been brought home to those outside a few expert bodies. Action will depend on the education of public opinion through the dissemination of the fruits of researches. It is abundantly clear that far more attention should be paid to the prevention of handicap in all its forms in the interests of the sufferers and of society which is responsible for their care and welfare.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHILD AND THE STATE

Attitudes to the child in the nineteenth century offer a strong contrast with those prevalent to-day. They were influenced partly by current views on population and on family responsibility, partly by attitudes to human nature. In a period of declining population, infant mortality, maternal welfare, child nurture, nutrition and health have become accepted as public concerns. When Sir Percy Alden, in his Halley Stewart Lecture for 1936, said that there could be no solution of the many problems connected with social and community welfare unless we began with the child, and that "the child is the foundation of the state and the first line of defence. We cannot lay too much stress upon the importance of the child if the state is to endure,"<sup>1</sup> he was making remarks which few of his contemporaries would object to, and which are now regarded as more or less axiomatic. Such a view would have been profoundly shocking to many public-spirited persons in an earlier age. This change is attributable partly to children having acquired almost a scarcity value, partly to profound changes in social evaluation. These changes have been reflected in legislation and administration.

The theories of population enunciated by Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) in his *Essay on Population*, first published anonymously in 1798, considerably influenced social thinking throughout the nineteenth century. If it was natural for population to increase until numbers pressed on the means of subsistence, for any relief dispensed to the poor to encourage their indiscriminate breeding, then a high infant mortality and other natural ways of diminishing the swelling hungry crowds

<sup>1</sup> Alden, Sir Percy. *Aspects of a Changing Social Structure* (1936), p. 15. Sir Halley Stewart Lecture.

were beneficial. The obligation of a parent to maintain his offspring might be hoped to deter the improvident from indiscriminate fatherhood. Actions which the unreflecting benevolent might take to relieve obvious distress, in the long run merely aggravated the evils they sought to mitigate. Thought is a potent instrument, and theories frequently influence action long after the premises upon which they have been founded have been refuted. Moreover, whole-hearted recognition of the obligation to mitigate through state action the hardships endured by the young of the industrial masses implied a criticism of an economic system which was increasing national wealth, and the comfort of the middle classes. It was not material values alone that were involved. Many people concerned with social problems were deeply committed to a belief in the potency of original sin. This point of view is clearly expressed in one of the most popular children's books of the century, the "History of the Fairchild Family."<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Fairchild, explaining to her daughter why children have to be brought up strictly and punished severely, tells her "all children are by nature evil, and while they have none but the natural evil principle to guide them, pious and prudent parents and masters must check their naughty passions in any way which they have in their power, and force them into decent and proper behaviour, and into what are called good habits." The Fairchild attitude to child nature and education was far more influential in England than the more humanitarian attitudes of those whose thinking on the nature of the child and his needs was influenced by Rousseau and his followers, who believed in the goodness of nature.<sup>2</sup> The interest in child study, and the development of what might be described as the natural history attitude to the child, did not develop until the end of the nineteenth century, and was stimulated by the opportunities afforded by the introduction of compulsory

<sup>1</sup> Sherwood, Mary M. *History of the Fairchild Family*. Published 1818-47, this classic went into many editions.

<sup>2</sup> Rousseau's famous book on education, *Emile*, opens with the assertion "Tout est bien sortant des mains de l'Auteur des choses, tout dégénère entre les mains de l'homme."

education. In 1896, Sir Douglas Galton, a kinsman of the great eugenist, founded the Childhood Society, for the scientific study of the mental and physical conditions of children, which concentrated mainly on deviations from the normal. Societies of similar types grew up in some numbers, indicating an increased interest in child problems.

In view of prevailing attitudes, it is not surprising that the first provisions to be made for children were for exceptional groups, the delinquent, neglected, and handicapped. Reluctantly Parliament legislated to prevent the grosser forms of economic child exploitation in certain scheduled occupations, but the general conditions of child nurture and care were regarded as the private concern of parents. Such theories carried little weight with teachers and others in daily intimate contact with numbers of semi-starved children whose hunger prevents them from benefiting from the instruction provided in the schools. Food charities of one kind and another had always existed, mostly parish concerns for the benefit of local inhabitants. Though they were condemned by Malthusians and those who accepted the principles of poor-law administration defined in the 1834 report, and though the Charity Commissioners deplored such foundations, new food charities continued to spring up to help mitigate winter distress. Even before the introduction of compulsory education the Destitute Children's Dinner Society, which was founded in 1866, distributed thousands of free dinners. Initially the provision of dinners was not associated in any way with medical inspection, and there was no attempt to define malnutrition nor to establish standards of feeding. Societies to provide cheap or free meals sprang up in the large centres of population to meet an obvious and urgent need.

The Charity Organisation Society, which kept vigilant watch over all forms of alms-giving, formed more than one sub-committee to investigate the charity of food, and in 1887 appointed a special officer to visit feeding centres. Despite the fact that Paris and other continental cities had adopted public provision of meals for necessitous children, they

viewed the growing movement in England with considerable anxiety.

The committee approved of providing cheap meals and free meals for the children of those in temporary distress, but considered that free meals for other children abrogated certain fundamental principles. Destitution was a poor-law responsibility, and provision of free meals for children of the destitute by bodies other than Boards of Guardians created overlapping of the kind the Society aimed at avoiding. Although a minority of their sub-committee thought that the needs of the individual child should come first, that there could be no doubt that a good meal did good to a hungry child and enabled him to receive instruction with more profit, the majority condemned such dangerous thinking and was of opinion that giving free dinners to hungry children would "debase the moral standing by offering a premium to recklessness and self-indulgence," would remove one more check on population, and contravene sound economics by offering a subsidy on wages.<sup>1</sup> The majority observed the apparent plausibility of the minority's argument, but the arguments of those who had favoured the subsidies to wages in the very early days of the century had sounded just as plausible, and it had taken the reforms of 1834 to abolish the evil consequences of Speenhamland.

Fortunately for the hungry young, the views of the heretics spread. In 1899 the London School Board, which had already carried out investigations into the prevalence of underfeeding amongst elementary school children, set up a joint committee on the feeding of school children, which later became a sub-committee of the London County Council: in 1905 it was responsible for feeding some 26,900 children.<sup>2</sup> At one time it favoured the establishment of school restaurants as a means of improving the physical development of the young. Such a

<sup>1</sup> Charity Organisation Society. *Charity and Food* (1887), pp. 13 and 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools*. P.P. 1906, vol. xlvii, p. 51.

proposal, however, was ahead of the thought of the time, and school feeding was organised on less ambitious lines. The movement was by no means confined to London. A voluntary body organised meals in Bradford and by 1904 was co-operating with the Education Committee and the Mayor's Fund ; Liverpool had a Food and Betterment Association ; Bristol a Children's Help Society which provided free breakfasts of porridge, milk, sugar, bread, and treacle. School meal services grew up independently from the system of school medical inspection, although medical inspection became fairly common soon after the Education Act of 1870 was passed, medical officers being appointed under the general powers conferred by that Act. In the early days the objects of inspections were strictly limited to detection of the grosser defects. As one witness before the Inter-departmental Committee of 1906 put it, " I was expected by the School Board to ask the single question, ' Do these children suffer from any physical defect which interferes with their reasonable progress in school ? ' I was not expected to ask, ' What is the cause of this defect ? ' nor the further question, ' How can I, as medical officer, treat these children ? ' " <sup>1</sup> There were some who considered that provision of free medical treatment would pauperise parents, weaken family sense of responsibility, and conflict with the legitimate interests of private medical practitioners. Evidence of poor physical development and underfeeding in the child population was, however, strong enough to bring about the passing of necessary initial legislation. The Education (Provision of Meals) Act of 1906 permitted local authorities, either alone or in conjunction with voluntary agencies, to provide and subsidise school meals on the days on which elementary schools were open, and the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act of 1907 laid upon all local education authorities the duty of instituting compulsory medical inspection, thereby making general a practice which had been adopted by more progressive authorities. Whatever the initial limitations of these measures, they mark an advance

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

and entailed complex administration developments. The school medical service called for a central direction, and in 1909 the medical department of the Board of Education was created with George Newman as its first head. Henceforward the annual reports of the chief medical officer of the Board of Education were to provide a valuable index to the condition of the country's children. Whereas to begin with, the feeding of school children was predominantly a relief measure, and selection rested with teachers, after the introduction of medical inspection, feeding became allied with health, and final selection rested with the school medical officers. Although the Act had provided a useful instrument, its permissive nature meant that proper use depended upon local initiative. Returns showed that few authorities appreciated the importance of nutrition. Despite the fact that from 10 to 12 per cent. of children in elementary schools were reported to be ill-nourished on the standards accepted at the time, only 32 out of 316 authorities made any provision for school feeding for the year 1920-21,<sup>1</sup> although the service qualified for government grant and received encouragement from the Board of Education. Parsimony, ignorance, and indifference have led to tardiness in the application of the increased and more exact knowledge of the nature of nutritional needs.

From simple beginnings, the school medical services have been elaborated to include innumerable specialised services for the treatment of different kinds of disorder, physical and mental. The degrees to which different local authorities avail themselves of their powers vary considerably. Much depends upon the quality of the personnel of the council's committees. The annual report of the chief medical officer to the Board of Education gives an account which enables the public to form a general picture of progress and stagnation. There is no substitute for local personal interest. Thus in the provision of school meals the number who avail themselves depends largely

<sup>1</sup> Newman, Sir George. *The Building of a Nation's Health* (1939), p. 331.



on the kind of room and service, the variety in the food provided, and the manner of serving, questions of detail which those with a real appreciation of the function of the service attend to, and others treat in a cursory manner. It is only as the public, local authorities, and officials appreciate the purpose and value of the work that they see to it that services for children attain a satisfactory standard, and conduct their work with a sense of urgency which infuses it with life. In this stirring and education of public opinion, voluntary associations play an important part. Bodies like the Children's Nutrition Council and the Nursery Schools Association prevent the spread of complacent satisfaction which applauds past achievement rather than anticipates future needs.

Once the state accepted responsibility for supervising the education and health of children, extension of range was a matter of time and of pressure from interested groups. Two factors directed interest to the promotion of health in the pre-school child. Once people no longer looked upon infant mortality as nature's beneficent way of preventing Great Britain from being overpopulated by indigent masses, the figures began to reveal to them some interesting facts. Whereas between 1851 and 1901 the general death-rate decreased from 22·7 to 16·9 per thousand of the population, the mortality of children under one year of age remained more or less constant,<sup>1</sup> a circumstance to which sanitary authorities were by no means indifferent. The introduction of school medical inspection showed that the survivors were not necessarily fit. For years the inspection of school entrants has yielded the heaviest return of defect. Clearly any movement concerned with the improvement of child health is concerned also with the conditions of maternity and maternal education.

The main agents of maternity and child welfare to-day are the clinics and health visitors of the local authorities. The trained professional health visitor of to-day is the successor of

<sup>1</sup> McCleary, G. F. *The Maternity and Child Welfare Movement* (1935), p. 4.

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the untrained employee of a voluntary movement, typical of British social service genesis. In 1862 a group of ladies in Manchester and Salford, struck by the ignorance of hygiene amongst working-class mothers, formed a Ladies' Sanitary Reform Association to "popularise sanitary knowledge, and to elevate the people physically, socially, morally, and religiously."<sup>1</sup> They pursued this conglomerate aim by dividing Manchester and Salford into districts, each under the surveillance of a lady, under whom a paid working woman visited, whose duty was to go "from house to house, irrespective of creed or circumstance, in such localities as their superintendents direct. They must carry with them carbolic powder, explain its use, and leave it where it is accepted." In addition they spoke of the virtues of cleanliness, thrift, regular attendance at places of worship, and invited mothers to meetings at which simple health talks were given. Visits were particularly directed to houses where there were infants. At the time notification of births was compulsory only within six weeks, and the local visitor no doubt frequently had knowledge of new arrivals before the registrar. The voluntary movement might have had little historical significance had it not become associated in 1890 with the work of Manchester Corporation. Visitors were placed under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health and the salaries of some of them paid by the sanitary authority to whom they supplied information about the conditions of the dwellings and persons they visited. Other local authorities became interested in the experiment, especially in its relation to the reduction of infant mortality. In 1892 Buckinghamshire County Council employed three salaried health visitors: other authorities followed. By 1905 about fifty towns employed women in this work.<sup>2</sup>

In its early phases, health visiting was an educational movement, ameliorative but not radical. The early visitors had

<sup>1</sup> McCleary, G. F. *The Early History of the Infant Welfare Movement* (1933), p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 89.

no special training ; later the kind of training demanded varied from area to area. The kind of qualifications desirable in health visitors became more apparent as time went on, and after the Ministry of Health was established, when, in conjunction with the Board of Education, training courses were established and necessary qualifications defined.

The introduction of clinics was inspired by French experiments. In France, concern with the falling birth-rate led a number of men to study ways of reducing infant mortality. Some maternity hospitals set up clinics which they induced mothers to attend for some months after confinement ; some offered small monetary rewards to those whose infants made satisfactory progress. Other clinics were set up by municipalities. Considerable attention was paid to food, breast feeding was encouraged, and sterilized milk provided for hand feeding. It was the visit of the Medical Officer of Health for St. Helens, Lancs., to France which led the Council to establish in 1899 the first milk depot in England. The depot provided sterilized milk for mothers. Other councils initiated schemes. The interest of local authorities in infant welfare preceded that of the government. The Local Government Board at first showed little sympathy with the nascent movement. In 1905, at the first international conference of infant welfare, the British government sent no representative, whereas three local authorities, Battersea, Glasgow, and Huddersfield, were represented. This indifference continued until 1914, when Exchequer grants were made available to authorities and bodies engaged in the education of mothers. During the first world war the movement gained strength, the number of clinics rising from 650 in 1915 to 1,278 in 1918.<sup>1</sup> The Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918 finally established the service as an integral part of the system of child care.

The services so far described, which are significant of increased consciousness of the importance to the nation of child nurture,

<sup>1</sup> McCleary, G. F. *The Maternity and Child Welfare Movement* (1935), p. 18.

operated through the family and consequently in no way superseded parental authority. Whilst advice was normally free, and systems of supervision initiated covered the child from conception to school leaving, that which resulted from following the advice, such as medical treatment or school feeding, was free only to those whose poverty was proven. Statutory and voluntary bodies devised administrative systems directed to persuading and cajoling parents into making use of the services provided. An obstinate or stupid mother, who fails to follow the advice of the school dental officer, does not have her authority superseded, her child is not taken to a dentist in defiance of parental indifference unless neglect reaches a degree which makes the parent liable to proceedings. Local authorities undertake persuasion by home visiting; the Ministry of Health launches propaganda campaigns which include startling posters; recently

voluntary body established a school for neglectful mothers. This middle course steers between a policy of leaving a child to the uninstructed tender mercies of its parents and parents to their own discretion on the one hand, and on the other to permitting statutory bodies to exercise functions or make decisions which tradition allots to parents, such as deciding whether or not to give consent to medical treatment or take advantage of scholarship vacancies. The effect to be anticipated from this policy is slow change over a long period of years of a kind which takes place as education gradually transmutes habit, rather than startling improvements within a generation. Thus the authority of the family remains sacrosanct in normal circumstances and is merely subject to official and unofficial pressures.

More significant of the change of attitude to the child are the considerations which operate when there is no family, or when the family breaks up and care of the children has to be allocated to one or other of the parents, as in separation or divorce. Early laws relating to bastards were directed mainly to protecting ratepayers from the burden of maintenance, by enabling poor-law authorities to recover costs from the father.

Before the Poor Law Reform of 1834, one of the duties of Overseers of the Poor was to discover unmarried women with child, and to induce them to "swear" the child to some man. No further evidence of paternity was required than the woman's oath,<sup>1</sup> a system which was open to obvious and flagrant abuse. Women themselves had no right to proceed against men for maintenance, and any money they received was allowed to them by magistrate's order out of the sums obtained as a result of the Overseers' proceedings. Often the allowance obtained in this way was greater than the amount normally given to a mother of a legitimate child on out-relief. The system was unfair, in that no adequate evidence of paternity was required, ineffective in that the sums recovered in no way balanced the sums disbursed, and the Poor Law Commissioners of 1832 regarded the whole procedure as an encouragement to "vice." They went to the other extreme, and intended to relieve fathers from all financial responsibility, placing it squarely on the mother, where "Providence appears to have ordained that it should be."<sup>2</sup> The welfare of the child was not a matter for consideration. In the course of the passage of the Act through Parliament, modifications of this principle were introduced. Poor-law authorities were granted the right of recovery from the father, but they had to make application to Quarter Sessions, a cumbersome procedure which did not work out well in practice. The mother was entitled to no part of the monies so obtained. Perhaps in an age in which human beings were regarded by many as creatures-activated by reasonable motives, the financial sanction was expected to deter women from producing children whom they had no means of supporting. Such optimism was to be disappointed, and Boards of Guardians continued to support indigent bastards and their mothers. A most important change in principle was introduced when, by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1844, the mother acquired the right of indemnification,

<sup>1</sup> Webb, S. and B. *English Local Government. English Poor Law History* (1927), Part I, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* (1929), Part II, vol. i, p. 96.

irrespective of whether or not she was chargeable, by the simple procedure of making application to Petty Sessions. Thus bastardy ceased to be a purely poor-law question, although the Bastardy Amendment Act of 1872 permitted poor-law authorities to proceed against the father at Petty Sessions for recovery of maintenance costs, though the amount was limited by statute. Money paid under order is regarded as the child's, not as the mother's,<sup>1</sup> and thus the bastard acquired certain rights and the severities recommended in 1834 underwent modification.

In the early nineteenth century, the family was looked upon as a rigid institution, in which the husband had absolute rights over the person and property of his wife and over those of his children who were not of age. The Court of Chancery, it is true, had the right to deprive a man of the guardianship of his child,<sup>2</sup> but the procedure was expensive, and beyond the means of most people. Whilst Shelley might be deprived access to his children on account of his unorthodox views, a poor man could exploit or misuse his children without hindrance. One of the ways of maintaining family solidarity was by legal support of paternal authority. Before 1839 the courts had no power to grant a woman living apart from her husband access to her children; a mother had no right at common law as against the father and could not gain control of those of her children who were under age. It was believed that this provision kept families together which otherwise might part. When the Custody of Infants Bill was debated in Parliament in 1839, Sir Ernest Sugden, one of the Bill's implacable opponents, argued that a woman's rights had to be sacrificed because to concede her rights to act independently or to facilitate her independent action threatened to break up the family. Despite able opposition, the Act was passed and conceded to a woman living apart from her husband access to her children and custody of those under the age of seven. The significance of this Act was that it was the first important inroad into time-honoured

<sup>1</sup> Reiss, E. *Rights and Duties of Englishwomen* (1934), p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

methods of maintaining a family unity based primarily on an autocratic family pattern, a step in the direction of taking into consideration welfare of the members of a family in addition to rights, an attitude defined in theory by the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1925, in which it is explicitly stated that in settling any dispute between a mother and father, the courts "shall regard the welfare of the infant as the first and paramount consideration, and shall not take into consideration whether from any point of view the claim of the father, or any right at common law possessed by the father, in respect of such custody, upbringing, administration or application is superior to that of the mother, or the claim of the mother is superior to that of the father."<sup>1</sup>

Emphasis on the importance of the welfare of the child is one of the important distinctions between common attitudes in the twentieth and nineteenth centuries. There is no clear and generally accepted concept of what "welfare" entails, nor is the principle applied in all spheres. There is still much muddled thinking about the purpose of the family as an institution, and neither in law nor in administration of the social services is it regarded primarily from the point of view of its function in child nurture. Thus in the allocation of custody of children of divorced parents, the question of a child's welfare may be subordinated to that of who is the offending party. The fruits of research into the physical and mental needs of children find their way slowly into administration and law, and constant pressure from the knowledgeable is required to prevent the occurrence of unnecessary time lags in bringing proven knowledge into general practice.

Another direction from which state protection of the child has grown, is in legislation to protect it from misuse by the parents through cruelty or neglect. Since the pattern of family living is clearly dependent on the economic structure of a society, it is inevitable that in periods of economic change family life should undergo profound disturbance and modification. It

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102.

was therefore to be expected that with the urbanisation and industrialisation during the nineteenth century, the readjustment should be accompanied by the need for a certain amount of intervention. The poor laws required a father to maintain his children, and tradition laid upon him responsibility for their well-being ; little attention was paid to instances of failure until, by the middle of the nineteenth century, interested groups became aware of child neglect and succeeded in awakening public interest in various forms of child protection. The long battle to protect children from misuse by their employers was followed by movements to prevent unwarrantable abuse by parents. If a child required protection from his natural parents, then it was necessary to create some authority who should be responsible for taking action, for bringing offenders to the courts. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1868 made it an offence for any parent wilfully to neglect to provide adequate food, clothing, medical aid, and lodging for his child in such a way that the health of the child would be seriously injured, and laid the duty of taking proceedings upon the Guardians of the parish in which the child was living. The cost of such proceedings was to be met out of the rates. Once more the destitution authority was charged with a responsibility which there was no one else to shoulder, but the expedient was unsatisfactory. It was not to be expected that poor-law officers would seek out cases in need of intervention, nor that the Guardians should be interested in promoting actions which, if successful, made a man liable on summary conviction to six months imprisonment, and saddled the poor law with the cost of maintaining his family whilst the sentence was being served.

The voluntary movement for the protection of children from cruelty owed its inspiration partly to American institutions. The institutions which grew up to receive neglected and abandoned children have already been described. Dr. Barnardo's homes and similar institutions provided an alternative to the unsatisfactory home, and took over the duties of the natural parents. They provided alternatives to guardianship by the



poor-law authorities. There were two important functions which they did not perform, first to ascertain cases of neglect or cruelty, and secondly to attempt to prevent ill-usage without removal. Either involves intervention between the child and his natural guardian, an act inimical to British habits of thought in the nineteenth century. Prevention of cruelty to animals had found more ready acceptance, and a society to further this aim was founded in 1824 ; legislation had been promoted and vast sums of money collected. No sacred principles were involved in intervening between a man and his cattle. But with children it was otherwise.

The story runs that a philanthropic Liverpool banker, on a visit to New York in 1881, noticed the existence of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and secured an introduction to its president, and through him to those responsible for running similar societies and shelters in other States. He was struck by what he saw and appreciated that the work provided a model for much-needed work in Britain. On his return, he founded a society in Liverpool similar to those which he had seen in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Other societies formed in different towns. The formation of the London branch in 1884 had a profound influence on the work. The Hon. Secretary, Benjamin Waugh (1839-1911), who afterwards became managing director of the National Society, was a remarkable man and a pioneer of vision. Waugh was a nonconformist minister, and in 1870 became a member of the Greenwich division of the London School Board. His work brought him into touch with neglectful parents and with the condition of children in the metropolis ; he was profoundly shocked by the inadequate protection of children offered by the law and by the treatment of young delinquents. His book "The Gaol Cradle : Who Rocks It ? " ranked him with the reformers, and his association with the N.S.P.C.C. gave him the opportunity of giving practical and constructive expression to his views. The Society, which

<sup>1</sup> National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. *Occasional Papers*, vol. xv. *Dates and Facts*.

was undenominational, met with some opposition, but branches were formed all over the country and Waugh selected and trained a body of inspectors whom he chose for their sympathy in handling children. Success demanded alteration in the law as well as workers who would detect cases which demanded intervention and who could try to bring parents to reason either by persuasion or by taking them to court.

Measures for protection or for interference between child and parent involve some degree of interference with parental rights and appreciation of society's obligation to the young, and implication of moral principles which were bound to clash with Victorian patriarchal notions and commonly accepted *laissez-faire* social doctrines. It was therefore to be expected that the improvement in the legal status of the child should take some time to mature. Waugh, aided by an able legal committee, worked to promote the necessary legislation. In 1889 an "Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to, and better Protection of, Children" was passed<sup>1</sup> which established penalties for ill-treatment and neglect. The Act was amended in 1894 and 1904 to embody amplifications and improved definitions, and imposed particularly heavy penalties in cases where it was proved that those guilty of neglect or ill-treatment had an interest in insurance policies on a child's life. Cases brought as a results of these Acts or revealed by those who worked in other ways to promote infant life protection and child care showed the need for wider and more radical measures. Compulsory school attendance brought children under the surveillance of the state and revealed facts about their conditions which it had been possible to ignore before; moreover there was more than one notorious case of baby-farming which scandalised the public and shook complacency. In the early years of the twentieth century many people had changed their attitude to children and were ready to consider the duty of the state towards them in a spirit fundamentally different from that common a quarter of a century earlier. The Children's Act of

<sup>1</sup> 52 & 53 Vic. c. 44.

1908, called by some a children's charter, was the first of a series of Acts which gave concrete expression to this changed outlook. They are concerned with protecting children from cruelty, economic exploitation, conditions calculated to endanger their morality, and define the circumstances in which children may be removed from the guardianship of unsuitable parents ; they seek to prevent baby-farming ; they make it an offence to sell intoxicating liquor or tobacco to children. It is not necessary here to examine in detail the provisions of the Acts of 1908 or 1933 ; it is sufficient to draw attention to the change in principle and to the foundations which have been laid upon which protection can be expanded as need and public conscience dictate. The Acts are an attempt to take account of the needs of children which are different in nature from those of adults, to offer protection against the kind of abuses to which the young are particularly open by reason of their immaturity, to establish the rights of children to special treatment. They mark the final change in treatment of delinquency, thereby abolishing the farce of trying juvenile offenders as if they were responsible adults, and marking the culmination of the initial efforts of pioneers who strove to demonstrate to an obstinate public opinion that in treating delinquent children the important consideration was not their offence but their youth.

Thus the administrative structure of child protection has become elaborated ; the legal structure has increased in scope and a variety of officers and organisations are involved. The N.S.P.C.C. employed 227 inspectors in 1946 and claimed to have investigated 41,720 cases, a majority of which were reported by the general public. A small proportion of these was taken to court ; others were dealt with in other ways. The Society has remained voluntary in the full sense of that term, that is to say it is managed by a self-appointed committee, financed by privately subscribed funds ; its inspectors are trained and salaried and co-operate closely with statutory authorities and its activities are nation wide. Protection, however, is an expression of wide scope and involves a great deal more than

intervention when abuse has taken place. School attendance officers, following up absentees, come across parents who keep children from school in order to help with the labour of the home; health visitors and other social workers are often in a position to check neglect in its early stages. Thus a framework was provided upon which a system could be built. Defects to-day are due less to inadequate legislation than to poor administration and allowing improperly-trained or unsuitable officers to carry out work which requires both special knowledge and special qualities. The findings of the Curtis Report of 1946 made this abundantly clear.

Perhaps the most complete method of dealing with unwanted children is by adoption, which has been defined as "a legal method of creating between a child and one who is not the natural parent of the child an artificial family relationship analogous to that of parent and child."<sup>1</sup> Although the method was used on the Continent and in the United States, it was only instituted in England by the Adoption Act 1926. Before that date, numbers of informal relationships, *de facto* adoptions, existed and numerous societies had come into being which acted as intermediaries between persons who had children to dispose of and persons who wished to acquire children. A majority of the children concerned were illegitimate. The child which is the object of such arrangements is obviously in need of special protection of a kind which calls for careful legal definition. In the absence of legal adoption, natural parents retain their rights to reclaim a child and may be activated so to do by cupidity. Thus it was not uncommon to find parents who had habitually neglected a child or had left it to be brought up by others to reclaim it as soon as it was capable of earning wages, and there was no legal safeguard against the action of such parents.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand there was no guarantee of the suitability of those who had assumed custody of the child. The Act of 1926 did

<sup>1</sup> *1st Report of the Child Adoption Committee* (1925), Cmd. 2401, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Committee on Child Adoption, 1921*. P.P. 1921, vol. ix, p. 165.

not preclude informal arrangements, but defined the conditions of legal adoption<sup>1</sup> and resulted in a steady increase in adoptions and in societies to facilitate them.

Adoption is a device which may provide at its best a completely satisfactory solution to the problem of an unwanted child, and at its worst render miserable a peculiarly defenceless creature. The issues involved are intricate and go far beyond legal considerations. An adoptive parent who can satisfy all the legal requirements stipulated or capable of definition may yet be unfit from a psychological standpoint to bring up a particular child. The effects of ill-suited adoption may be reflected in social maladjustment and in delinquency or social inefficiency; society must therefore take cognisance of the conditions of adoption. The growth of the practice of adoption and the multiplication of societies to promote adoption led to the appointment of a departmental committee to inquire into adoption societies and agencies; this committee, which reported in 1937, found that informal or unlegalised adoption was still common; indeed in 1935 less than one-third of the adoptions arranged by one of the largest societies were legalised<sup>2</sup> and in consequence the conditions were not controlled by the provisions of the Act of 1926. The committee was of opinion that there should be control of the activities of adoption agencies, which were concerned with "children forming a particularly defenceless section of the community," and that it was only logical to extend to them the protections already afforded to children in a similar position, for example by the provisions of the Children's Acts. Their recommendations led to the passing of the Adoption of Children (Regulation) Act 1939, the purposes of which were to regulate the making of arrangements by adoption societies and other persons in connection with the adoption of children; to provide for the supervision of adopted children by welfare

<sup>1</sup> 2,967 adoptions were registered in 1927, 4,127 in 1931, 5,185 in 1936. *Report of the Departmental Committee on Adoption Societies and Agencies* (1937), Cmd. 5499, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

## THE CHILD AND THE STATE

authorities in certain cases ; to restrict the making and receipt of payments in connection with the adoption of children, and to amend the Adoption of Children Act 1926, and the Adoption of Children (Scotland) Act 1930. Agencies must now be licensed by the county or county borough authority of the area within which they operate and work under stipulated conditions. Every effort has been made to provide legal protection which covers all points at which abuse is liable to arise.

The prevalence of adoption and its importance makes it relevant to ask whether the practice of those voluntary and statutory bodies which facilitate it conforms with available knowledge of the conditions necessary for success. The various inquiries which have taken place in recent years have been concerned primarily with protection and legal safeguards rather than with sociological factors. Adoption is a limited field of social work which lends itself well to methods of social research ; it poses a number of problems susceptible to detailed analysis and upon which a good deal of data has been collected, problems upon which the solution of which success or failure depends ; there is the question of the right age for adoption, technique of separation, of assessing adopters' suitability, of judging success or failure within a probationary period, and so on. Five thousand annual registered adoptions could yield valuable material for analysis which, properly used, would promote the happiness and satisfactory adjustment in future adoptions. There is, however, no evidence to show that either voluntary or statutory bodies have been concerned with defining or assessing the conditions of satisfactory adoption in other than legal terms. The application of scientific method to social problems and the scientific habit of thought about social problems have not penetrated very far.<sup>1</sup> People still tend to place more confidence in the " instinct " of the social worker, judgment of those who know and other subjective methods of assessment than in conclusions drawn from quantitative analysis or in other forms

<sup>1</sup> There is an admirable discussion of this point in Lundberg's *Social Research* (1942), chapter 1.

of application of scientific method. So the experience of adoption societies and agencies is not collated, nor is there any effective attempt to establish common procedures. In this, as in other fields, the link between child study, sociological method, and administration is purely fortuitous; it frequently does not exist at all.

*Survey*

Considerable changes in the treatment of children have taken place since the time when child delinquents were tried in the same courts as adults, thrown into gaol, deported or hanged, since fathers had undisputed authority to dispose as they would of their offspring, to leave them ignorant or send them to school, to put them to work at what age they chose, since the improved survival rate of children born to those with low incomes was regarded as a misfortune. Changes in attitude have been reflected in changes in law and administration. Children have acquired status; they are afforded special protection from economic exploitation, from abuse, and from gross forms of neglect. If they offend against the laws of the land they are dealt with by special courts and the institutions to which they are committed are intended to rehabilitate rather than to punish them. A falling birth-rate has persuaded us that children are a national asset, that their mental and physical well-being concerns not only their parents, but society, and this conviction is reflected in the growing number of services and institutions which have been created to further their welfare. Yet significant as this change may be, it would be a mistake to overlook its limitations. These limitations appear less in the legislative framework of existing provision than in the administration, detail, and supervision of the various services.

In recent years, knowledge of the mental and physical needs of children has become more exact. Nutritional standards have been evolved which have gained general recognition from those qualified to judge them; pedagogues are agreed on essential educational needs and know the number of children it is possible to teach in a class; the emotional needs of the child have been studied and means to readjust the maladjusted devised. Curative



services, directed to the help of the physically or mentally sick, have revealed ways of enhancing the life and well-being of normal children. Practice, however, lapses far behind the standards recognized as desirable in theory, and on occasion the discrepancy makes avowed policy savour of hypocrisy. Deficiencies recently revealed in the conduct of children's homes did not arise from lack of available knowledge, the crowded classes in elementary schools shame our educational system, young people labour in factories and workshops in conditions more suited to adults than to those in their teens whose physical growth is still incomplete. Many institutions and services still bear the stamp of their origin and the attitudes of those who manage them, whether voluntary or statutory bodies, savour of leave-overs from the age of the Fairchild family. There are still orphanages where children are clothed in unimaginative uniforms and from which they pass into a restricted labour market, their occupations selected for reasons other than the dictates of their abilities. There are numerous obstacles to improvement. Supervision of the administration of services and institutions for the promotion of the welfare of children is divided amongst a number of departments. The Ministries of Health and Education, the Home Office, and the Board of Control are each concerned with important functions of child care and with the supervision of work conducted by voluntary bodies. Whilst there is no obvious overlapping, there is also little fundamental co-ordination, and although inquiries may be made by inter-departmental committees, recommendations for action involving more than one department are apt to be neglected or pigeon-holed, like those of the report of the Mental Deficiency Committee of 1929. No single department or joint body is responsible for collecting information or conducting or promoting research, and in consequence the link between available knowledge and administrative practice is weak. The standard of administration varies from local authority to local authority and hitherto usually there have been no specially qualified officers to undertake such crucial duties as the supervision of

boarded-out children or of homes. These deficiencies reflect the indifference of the public and of responsible bodies to the problems involved. It is to be hoped that these conditions will be remedied by the government's decision in 1947 to concentrate responsibility for supervision of the care of all children deprived of their natural homes in the Children's Branch of the Home Office. County and county borough councils must now appoint suitable supervising officers, and the care of children and supervision of institutions and homes to which they are sent will henceforward be in the charge of trained and specially-selected officers.

An objective approach to administrative problems is hampered by tradition and vested interest, which affect voluntary bodies and statutory bodies alike. Institutions solidly built by the Victorians continue to be used, though their design may necessitate the kind of barrack life which is alien to a free and homely atmosphere; endowed foundations tend to continue in the tradition of those who founded them; voluntary societies hang on to administrative territories which they occupied in the past, irrespective of subsequent developments; thus voluntary maternity and child welfare centres may struggle to continue in competition with those wholly provided by local authorities. It is clear that the legacy of past ages hampers a functional approach to social institutions and services. Absence of co-operation between voluntary bodies may not reduce the efficacy of their work, but it necessarily prevents full use being made of the results of their experience. There are, for instance, no common methods of keeping records at voluntary homes or approved schools; no attempt to bring experience to the service of more exact knowledge of the kind of treatment which suits differently-constituted children. Differences in the qualifications and training required of staff do not reflect an experimental or pioneering spirit so much as differences in tradition or habit amongst different organisations. Suspicion of a scientific or sociological approach to social problems is shown by the absence of a classificatory system of approved schools, homes, and

similar institutions. Similarly the statutory obligations of local authorities place geographical boundaries upon the institutions to which children are sent. These defects are explicable in terms of history and of public attitudes, yet they should be borne in mind by all those concerned with the administration of social services. If the child is indeed the foundation of the state and its first line of defence, then surely we do ill to tolerate compromise, ignorance, and lax administration, and to allow parsimony or sentiment to prevent us from making full use of the growing knowledge of the essentials of the needs of children.

PART THREE

SERVICES FOR ADULTS



## CHAPTER VII

### OLD AGE AND SICKNESS

In the nineteenth century the misfortunes which befell adults evoked far less active sympathy than the lot of children. It was commonly believed that after childhood people were responsible for the conditions in which they found themselves ; that there was a correlation between virtue and income, and that it was not only in heaven that virtue was rewarded. Those who administered charities distinguished between the kind of assistance appropriate to the deserving poor who showed evidence of their worthiness by thrift, and that appropriate to the improvident or unvirtuous. People frowned upon the careless benevolence of those earlier benefactors who attached no condition to the pensions, doles, and gifts of clothes or food their endowments provided for the poor. One writer has gone so far as to affirm that there was an anti-charitable movement in the middle of the century.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly there was a certain censoriousness amongst the charitable.

#### *The Aged*

The suffering of the poor from the hazards of sickness and old age is intensified in periods of economic upheaval. Private charity has always concerned itself to some extent with the old and the sick, providing almshouses, minor comforts, and small money doles. When the poor are massed together in segregated areas of industrial towns, their sufferings are less likely to flutter the consciences of those in easy circumstances than when they live in rural areas in which individuals are known by name or reputation to their neighbours. At the opening of the nineteenth century there existed a large number of small local charities and

<sup>1</sup> Kenny, C. S. *Endowed Charities* (1880), p. 46.

scattered institutions which had been founded and endowed in earlier centuries to meet the local needs of a smaller and differently-distributed population. Poverty was a condition of which the symptoms had not been analysed. The efforts of the charitable were not directed to the solution of a general problem, nor to afford help to all those who needed it, but to helping those persons selected by the donors or their nominees. The general obligation for providing for the poor in emergency rested with the poor law ; provision outside the poor law depended mainly on the existence of local endowments and of parochial charities.

Increased longevity brings with it the penalty of creating a problem of disposal. The old who can no longer earn need income, and those who cannot look after themselves need care. The two methods of securing income in old age are through pensions and through savings. Superannuation, which is a combination of both methods, and relates payments on retirement to length of service and former rates of earnings, was uncommon for other than salaried workers until recent times, except in the Civil Service, which has provided superannuation allowances for all grades of established personnel since 1810. For the great body of industrial workers, there were pensions of no kind. Nor could wage-earners who practised the Victorian virtue of thrift in its most exacting forms expect to age in comfort and security. The Commissioners who inquired into charities in the early years of the nineteenth century found endowments of over £552,000 out of a total of more than £2,000,000 dedicated to pensions and almshouses. The geographical distribution, the size of the individual endowments, and the conditions attached to them were such that the fringe of the problem was hardly touched. Some donors were content to make provision for one or two old people ; some attached peculiar conditions to their trusts. The Mary Reading almshouse at Southwark was one of the most curious examples. In 1742 Mrs. Reading gave £50 to the parish to provide two small houses, one to accommodate a poor man, who must be

named Joseph, the other to accommodate a poor woman, who must be named Mary. The vestry, which had charge of the administration of the funds, carried out its trust faithfully, and undertook the upkeep of the buildings.<sup>1</sup> It was quite common to find the administration of endowments for the benefit of the aged poor entrusted to the Overseers, which may be taken to indicate that the sharp difference in attitude to indigence between poor-law authorities and others had not arisen at the time the endowments were made.

Whilst charity no doubt aided many individual cases in those parts of the country which enjoyed local endowments, the bulk of the indigent aged fell to the care of the poor law. Between 1848 and 1908, the aged, infirm, and their dependents constituted more than one-third of the total pauper population.<sup>2</sup> Usually old people were granted out-relief in money. There is evidence, however, that the Poor Law Board inspectors after 1870 urged the Guardians to apply the workhouse test, with the object of putting pressure on those relatives who were not legally liable, to offer support, with the consequence of some reduction in the numbers in receipt of outdoor relief.<sup>3</sup> The effect in London of this policy is reflected by a resolution passed in 1876 by the council of the Charity Organisation Society "That, as it appears that many cases of individual hardship are occurring, especially amongst the respectable aged poor, in consequence of the laudable efforts of Boards of Guardians to do away with the much-abused system of outdoor relief, it is the duty of this Society, while cordially co-operating with the Guardians, to ascertain how private charity may best be directed to meet those isolated cases."<sup>4</sup> The Society was unlikely to err in the direction of overestimating hardship.

<sup>1</sup> Wade, J. *An Account of the Public Charities in England and Wales* (1828), p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Webb, S. and B. *English Local Government. English Poor Law History* (1929), Part II, vol. i, p. 349.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 351.

<sup>4</sup> *Co-operation of District Committees of the Charity Organisation Society with Boards of Guardians* (1879), p. 15.



That application of the workhouse test was no solution to the general problem is demonstrated by the fact that it was found that one-third of all men and women who reached the age of 70 were driven to accept poor relief. After the appearance of the report of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor in 1895, there was a spate of literature on the subject. It became apparent that no juggling with conditions of poor relief would offer a satisfactory solution to the general problem, and proposals for pensioning the aged were promulgated. The official circulars of the central authority reflected the change in public opinion. In 1896, Boards of Guardians were urged to show "greater discrimination" "between the respectable aged who became destitute and those whose destitution is distinctly the consequence of their own misconduct."<sup>1</sup> Within the workhouses, such indulgences were permitted as a small weekly allowance of tobacco and of dry tea, and a less stringent discipline was recommended. The change in attitude and practice was a prelude to the introduction of pensions. The Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 provided a non-contributory pension of 5/- a week, subject to a means test, for old persons of 70 and over; the amount was raised in 1919 to 10/-. The regulations, as amended in 1924, laid down that a full pension of 10/- a week was payable to old persons who had unearned incomes not exceeding £39 a year and earned incomes not exceeding £26 5/-. Pensions deductions were scaled for those whose incomes exceeded these amounts. Thus a pensioner might enjoy a maximum total income of £91 5/- a year. This amount, though inadequate for old people in urban areas who had to live on their own, relieved the pressure for those living with relations, and marked a considerable advance in state provision for the aged. Great as were the benefits conferred by non-contributory pensions, a problem of poverty remained, for few men and women retain their earning capacity to the age of 70. It was therefore logical that the question should be pursued further. The Widows', Orphans',

<sup>1</sup> Webb, S. and B. *English Local Government. English Poor Law History* (1929), Part II, vol. i, p. 353.

and Old-Age Contributory Pensions Act 1925, which provided pensions for insured workers at the age of 65 and for the wives of insured workers at 60, was followed in 1940 by the Old-Age Widows' Pension Act, providing supplementary pensions through the Assistance Board, which was also charged with promoting the welfare of pensioners. It can be claimed that the National Insurance Act 1946, with its provision of a retirement pension of 26/- a week for old persons of either sex, has virtually solved the poverty aspect of the problem of the aged. A recent survey claims that "the new retirement pensions are a great deal better than anything that has been done before. The 1946 Act is a measure of which the nation has a right to be proud." <sup>1</sup>

State provision, which now provides coverage for all old persons, does not exhaust the total provision for the aged in Great Britain. In addition there are superannuation schemes operated by public bodies and private firms, and charitable endowments.

Endowed charities have a total of approximately £5 million a year available for distribution to old people.<sup>2</sup> These charities are of different kinds, and include trade and professional funds, religious charities, charities with residence restrictions, and national charities. They provide both pensions and residential accommodation, and in 1943 distributed pensions to some 75,539 old persons.<sup>3</sup> Most beneficiaries were also in receipt of statutory pensions. How far these funds are used in the best interests of the aged, now that statutory provision has so much improved, is open to question. The problem of the aged to-day is less a problem of poverty than of care and amenity. It has been estimated that in 1989 the number of persons of pensionable age will be equal to the number of children, whilst the number of persons of working age will be three millions less than in

<sup>1</sup> *Old People*. Report of a Survey Committee on the problems of Ageing and the care of Old People under the chairmanship of B. Seeborn Rowntree (1947), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.

1946.<sup>1</sup> If the aged are also unable to look after themselves, it is clearly a matter of national importance that means should be sought to provide old people with the care and comfort they need and of rendering them healthy and independent for as long a time as possible, without absorbing for the purpose an undue proportion of the diminishing number of able-bodied persons to whom will fall the task of maintaining the country's industries and services. The nature of the problem of the aged has altered with the change in statutory provision and of the age distribution of the nation. The question of amenities and suitable provision for recreation for the aged is essentially a field well suited to voluntary endeavour. So far as charitable funds for this purpose are concerned, some redistribution is undoubtedly desirable.

### *The Physically Sick*

Sickness involves at the same time loss of health and loss of income. It is a condition which bears heavily on the poor, and is necessarily the source of much suffering. It was not, however, a problem which made the greatest appeal to those who endowed charities; endowments for education, for the aged and for purposes associated with the established Church exceeded those for medical purposes.<sup>2</sup> In the eighteenth century the sick in rural areas attracted neither thought nor provision.<sup>3</sup> It was the town dwellers who were the first to benefit from the expansion of medical knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

The vast and fascinating topic of the growth of social provision for the prevention and cure of sickness is outside the scope of this study.<sup>5</sup> In general, preventive medicine and sanitary provision depend on statutory action. Philanthropists cannot control main drainage, prevent water pollution or food

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Select Committee on the Charitable Trusts Acts.* P.P. 1884, vol. ix, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Gray, B. Kirkman. *A History of English Philanthropy* (1905), p. 236.

<sup>4</sup> See *ante*, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> See Newman, Sir George. *The Building of a Nation's Health* (1939).

adulteration, eliminate slums or ensure the environmental conditions necessary for the maintenance of a nation's health. By their own action they can touch but the fringe of the fundamental problems, or advocate and point the way to necessary steps.

Essentially, it was the consequences of neglect which awakened the authorities to the need for public health measures. An invasion of cholera in 1831 killed upwards of 50,000 persons in a population of some 23 millions.<sup>1</sup> The government, in alarm, sent investigators to Russia to find out what they could about means of treatment, and set up an emergency Board of Health with subordinate local boards. But nothing effective was done, and Asiatic cholera visited England again in 1848-9, 1853-4, and 1865-6.<sup>2</sup> Epidemics of this nature threatened alike rich and poor ; to cope with them required state action, or, more precisely, state medicine. The conversion of the British public to this point of view was largely the work of a small body of men, disciples of Jeremy Bentham, of whom the best known is Edwin Chadwick who, as secretary to the Poor Law Commission, was largely responsible for urging the employment of three eminent medical men to investigate the prevalence of epidemic disease, which imposed heavy and preventible burdens on the poor rates. One of these three was Dr. Southwood Smith, graduate of Edinburgh and physician to Jeremy Bentham, who published a book in 1830 on fevers, explaining to an apathetic public that these scourges were largely preventible. Smith, who was associated with the Royal Commission on the coal mines, threw himself devotedly into the sanitary reform movement. His granddaughter, Octavia Hill, was to carry his sanitary principles still farther in her pioneer work in providing and managing working-class dwellings.

The revelation of the sanitary conditions in which the labouring population lived and toiled eventually led to the creation of a sanitary code. The Public Health Act 1875

<sup>1</sup> Newman, Sir George. *The Building of a Nation's Health* (1939), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

was the foundation; it imposed on local authorities the obligation to appoint medical officers of health, and to establish standards of drainage, sewerage, street scavenging, house refuse removal, and the isolation of infectious persons. Whilst the prevention of sickness had to await the growth of knowledge and necessary legislation, there remained the problem of sick persons, whether they suffered from preventible fevers or other diseases. The poor had to rely on four methods of relief: hospitals, provident dispensaries, attention in the home, and the poor law.

The efficiency of hospitals is hard to gauge. Florence Nightingale pointed out to the National Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences that hospital statistics were misleading. At best they took account only of mortality which took place in the hospital. "If the function of a hospital were to kill the sick," she commented, "statistical comparisons of this nature would be admissible. As, however, its proper function is to restore the sick to health as speedily as possible, the elements which really give information as to whether this is done or not are those which show the proportion of sick restored to health, and the average time which has been required for this object."<sup>1</sup> Such information was not obtainable. Admission to hospital was normally a matter of patronage. The normal practice was for a patient to be required to secure a letter. A "letter" was a title, or part-title, to admission. Subscribers received letters in return for their contributions, thereby becoming potential patrons of sick persons who wished to be admitted to the institution to which the patron had subscribed. It was this ability to dispense patronage that encouraged the rich to contribute, for they were thereby enabled to provide for sick servants or other dependents. In the early years of the nineteenth century, institutions which attempted other methods were apt to get into financial difficulties. The London House of Recovery, founded in 1801 and opened in

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1858), p. 462.

1802, aimed at abating the spread of fever by accepting cases without letter, and by whitewashing and cleansing the houses and possessions of infected persons. The idea of subscribing to a charity which carried with it no advantage of providing for dependents made no appeal to the wealthy. The House would have had to close, but that Mr. Addington secured for it a Parliamentary grant of £3,000 in 1804.<sup>1</sup>

Hospital was the last resort of the industrious poor. Apart from the difficulty of gaining admission before the abolition of the letter system, hospitalisation meant loss of employment, and loss of employment through sickness meant until our own times loss of support for dependents, recourse to public assistance, and need to spend savings. It was natural, therefore, that the poor should put off going to hospital as long as possible, a fact which undoubtedly lost many the chances of recovery.

Hospitals were not the only places where the sick poor could get treatment for their ills. There grew up in the eighteenth century a vigorous dispensary movement. Dispensaries were associated with provident movements and with missions. By 1790 there were already some 50,000 dispensaries.<sup>2</sup> They recommended themselves to the charitable for their economy and to the sick for their services. The poor, in exchange for their few pence a week, received skilled medical attention and medicines. Dispensaries multiplied during the nineteenth century, and helped to meet a need for which there was no other provision.

The only provision to meet the poverty due to sickness was through sick clubs and friendly societies. During the eighteenth century, friendly societies were numerous. They recommended themselves to the governing classes as an encouragement to the poor to meet their needs through thrift instead of by recourse to the poor law. An Act of 1793 provided that Overseers of the Poor should not remove members from the place where they

<sup>1</sup> *The History of the London House of Recovery* (1817). Printed for the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor.

<sup>2</sup> Gray, B. Kirkman. *A History of English Philanthropy* (1905), p. 134.

were living to the place where they had legal settlement. There was considerable legislation about the rules of these societies, and the Registrar of Friendly Societies was created in 1846 with the duty of examining rules. Societies were organised on a local basis, and their finances were frequently precarious. Many trade unions developed friendly society activities in the nineteenth century. The societies performed a valuable service to their members, but the funds at their disposal did not allow them to do more than help members over the financial difficulties arising from short illnesses. The main body of sick persons had to rely on the poor law.

The evolution of the medical services was dependent not only on the growth of medical knowledge and improvement in training of medical practitioners, but also on the growth of a skilled nursing profession. Nursing emerged from a semi-skilled or unskilled occupation to a skilled profession in the middle of the nineteenth century, largely owing to the energetic reforms instigated by Florence Nightingale. The evolution of the nursing profession made possible the development of domiciliary nursing and maternity services and public health visiting, services which have contributed much to the health of the nation.

Many conditions may be treated by the attention of a trained nurse in the patient's home. In Liverpool in 1859 the first nurse to be employed at a salary to undertake this work was engaged by a certain William Rathbone, who, having experienced the advantage of skilled nursing in the case of illness of his own family, conceived the idea of carrying these benefits to the homes of the poor.<sup>1</sup> The service was soon taken over by a district nursing society which employed nurses all over the city. The value of the service was appreciated, and other towns followed Liverpool's example. Manchester formed a society in 1864, Leicester in 1867, and Birmingham in 1870; the first rural association was formed in 1888 and the first county association in Hampshire in 1891; by 1903 there were 10 county

<sup>1</sup> Braithwaite, C. *The Voluntary Citizen* (1938), p. 200.

and 388 district associations. To begin with, the work of individual associations was uncoordinated, and the organisation of the local service depended entirely on the direction of the local committee. However in 1889 the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses was formed (now the Queen's Institute of District Nursing), and its aim was to co-ordinate the work of district associations, to integrate the service, and to standardize and improve the training of district nurses.<sup>1</sup> It was on this body and on the initiative of the voluntary local associations that the proficiency and adequacy of domiciliary nursing depended. A survey published by the Institute in 1935 showed that in England and Wales 95 per cent. of the population was within areas served by district nursing associations, and a total of 1,657,000 of the population was not covered.<sup>2</sup> The service was entirely voluntary, for local authorities were not empowered either to provide domiciliary nursing or to give grants to district nursing associations until 1936. The Public Health Act of that date permitted them to make payments for the nursing of certain specified diseases. Before that date it was possible for public assistance committees to make certain payments to associations, and grants might be made for nursing notifiable diseases, or for cases which came under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act. It would be fair to assume that the state had not considered domiciliary nursing to be an essential part of public health provision. The Public Health Act 1936 was a first step in revision of this view. Final steps have still to be taken. The National Health Service Act 1946 makes it the duty of the local health authority to provide a home nursing service for those who, for good reason, require nursing in their own homes, and permits them, with the approval of the Minister, to make part or all of this provision by arrangement with voluntary organisations.

Midwifery and maternity nursing services developed somewhat differently from general nursing services. Poor mothers

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 270.



in the nineteenth century were waited upon in their confinements by neighbours or by women who acquired their skill by practice. The work was not generally regarded as requiring special skill. The midwife "was often illiterate, often incapable even of reading a thermometer, and usually quite ignorant of modern methods of nursing and of the meaning of 'cleanliness' in the surgical sense."<sup>1</sup> Agitation had led to nothing; a number of fruitless attempts were made to get regulative measures through Parliament. Medical officers in lying-in hospitals in London and the larger provincial towns had undertaken the work of instructing midwives, and although a few well-educated women took advantage of these facilities, they were so much in a minority as to make little difference to the general picture. The Obstetrical Society of London instituted a voluntary examination for midwives in 1872. Those who passed were issued with a diploma that guaranteed that the possessor was "a skilled midwife, competent to attend natural labours."<sup>2</sup> There was no system of registration of holders of the diploma, and no standard qualifications existed. At last, in 1902, the Midwives Act was passed to secure the better training of midwives and to regulate their practice. The Act did not become operative immediately. It set up the Central Midwives Board, which is responsible for the registration of midwives, restricted as from 1905 the use of the title "midwife" to persons certified under the Act, and prohibited as from 1910 uncertified women from attending women in childbirth, habitually and for gain, otherwise than under the direction of a qualified medical practitioner. The Act constituted each county and county borough council throughout England and Wales the local supervising authority within its administrative boundaries. Duties included maintenance of a register of midwives, general supervision, and investigation of charges of malpractice or negligence, etc.

The departmental committee which was appointed to consider

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Departmental Committee on the Training and Employment of Midwives, 1929*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

the training and employing of midwives, and which reported in 1929, surveyed developments which had taken place since the Act of 1902. At the time, midwives practising in rural areas were mainly those employed by district nursing associations. They included "Queen's Nurses" who had received a full general training and a further year's special training, and village nurse-midwives who held no general nursing certificate, but were trained in midwifery by the county nursing associations and supplied to district associations after a period of training which varied in duration. At the time 20 per cent. of the rural population of England was unprovided with a nurse-midwife.<sup>1</sup> The committee found that, despite the law, many uncertified women were still practising, and concluded that the only remedy was the application of a state maternity scheme.<sup>2</sup>

The improvement in status of midwives was undoubted, but salaries are not of a kind to make the profession financially attractive. Conditions depended largely on the funds of local nursing associations, which were responsible for both salary and equipment. Minimum rates for a Queen's nurse were £68 a year, rising by increments of £3 a year to £80, with an allowance of £8 a year for uniform, £1 1/- for board and laundry, and provision of equipment.<sup>3</sup> It was, of course, within the power of local associations to offer salaries above the minimum. Long after cheap motor cars came on the market, it was common for district nurses to have to depend, day and night and in all weathers, on a bicycle to make their rounds.

The year 1936 marked a new stage in national provision. The Midwives Act of that date made it the duty of every supervising authority to secure an adequate number of salaried full-time midwives, whether by themselves directly employing certified midwives, or by making arrangements with welfare councils or voluntary organisations. There was no intention of superseding the district nursing associations, but the provision of an adequate

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

service was no longer dependent exclusively on their efforts. Conditions of grant-aid were revised. In 1939 the Central Midwives Board issued new training rules which gave more unity to the schemes throughout the country. Development of the service was influenced by war-time exigencies. In 1941 a Nursing and Midwives Division of the Ministry of Health was created under a Chief Nursing Officer and two Deputy Chief Nursing Officers, and women inspectors were appointed whose duties included inspection of domiciliary midwifery, including the work of county nursing associations.<sup>1</sup> Despite the shortage of nurses, there were at the end of 1943 10,279 domiciliary midwives, of whom about 5,000 were employed by district nursing associations.<sup>2</sup> The task for the future is integration of the service with other parts of the National Health Service.

The recognition of a national obligation to provide adequate curative and preventive health measures came about slowly. Certain prerequisites were necessary; growth of knowledge, spread of knowledge, and preparedness on the part of the professions concerned to advocate and participate in nation-wide schemes. This was no suitable field for the benevolent amateur. Nevertheless the enterprise of philanthropists played an important part. Provision of domiciliary nursing at the level achieved for so large a proportion of the population was undoubtedly one of the finest achievements of voluntary effort in Great Britain. As emphasis shifted from curative to preventive medicine, the need for state intervention was apparent, for complete service and complete coverage became essential. This change in emphasis is not yet complete, and its full implications have still to be worked out.

Poverty associated with sickness presented a different kind of problem, though it must have reacted upon the health problems of individuals. The growth of sick clubs, friendly societies, and trade union activities in this field in the nineteenth

<sup>1</sup> *On the state of the Public Health during six years of war, 1939-1945*, p. 209, *Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 214.

century was an indication of the working population's concern with the risk of sickness. The introduction of National Health Insurance, whatever the limitation of the scheme, was a notable advance. The inadequacy of benefits to meet the needs of sick people, let alone those of their dependents, was recognized since 1924 ; the health provisions of the National Insurance Act 1946, should eliminate sickness as a primary cause of poverty.

## *The Mentally Sick*

Physical illness affects others than the immediate sufferers only if it is infectious. Hence, perhaps, the stimulus given to public health measures by recurring outbreaks of cholera. Mental sickness, on the other hand, may lead people to become a nuisance to their neighbours. Regulations about lunatics and idiots figured early in British legislation, but were concerned mainly with apprehension and control. The lunatic poor could be apprehended on the warrant of two justices. No medical certification was required. The lunatic who annoyed his neighbours was a disturber of the peace. The poor were confined either in workhouses or in private madhouses ; those who were not indigent, in private madhouses. As has already been noted<sup>1</sup> there was no general sympathy with the insane, and it took madness in high-placed persons to evoke any general interest in the subject. Legislation was concerned with protecting the public rather than protecting the insane from abuse.

The first revelation of conditions in which the demented were secluded occurred in 1763, when a committee of the House of Commons were appointed to inquire into the state of private madhouses. This committee, after hearing witness after witness describe how patients were liable to be chained for years to their beds, cautiously gave their opinion that the state of private madhouses required the interposition of the legislature.<sup>2</sup> The legislature, however, did not hurry to act. Ten years after

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Tuke, D. H. *Chapters in the History of the Insane in the British Isles* (1882), p. 98.

the report was received a regulative Bill passed the House of Commons, but was thrown out by the House of Lords. The following year, 1774, a weaker measure than the discarded Bill was passed, which introduced a somewhat ineffective scheme for licensing and visitation of private madhouses—in London and its immediate neighbourhood by five Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, in other parts of the country by justices at quarter sessions. The visitors were given no power to correct any abuses which they might find. Adverse reports were to be posted in the Censors' room at the Royal College, where they might be read by those who took the trouble to do so. Commenting on this measure in 1847, the Commissioners in Lunacy, a body created in 1845, pointed out that the Act did not require visits to be made to private patients, and left authorisation of confinements in the hands of the justices of the peace.<sup>1</sup> Nor were conditions materially improved. "The enormities in asylums, public as well as private, previously to the Parliamentary investigations of 1815, 1816, and 1827, can scarcely be exaggerated," they reported. In York asylum, concealed rooms were found of which even the governors were ignorant, in one of which 13 women patients were confined in a space 12 feet by 7 feet and 10 inches;<sup>2</sup> in Bethlem Hospital, a man was found who had been chained to the wall for 14 years without liberty. "Stout iron rings were riveted round his arms, body, and neck, the latter being made to slide upwards and downwards on a massive iron bar inserted in the wall."<sup>3</sup> The medical profession was as uninterested in insanity as the general public, and the problem attracted the attention of only a few individuals, who urged the need for regulative and protective legislation.

One of the pioneers in the amelioration of conditions was a Quaker, William Tuke. The story goes that in 1791 a woman was confined in an asylum in York, and her friends were refused

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy*. P.P. 1847-8, vol. xxxii, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 452.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 455.

permission to visit her. The circumstances aroused their suspicions as to her treatment, suspicions which proved to be only too well founded. Tuke, a citizen of York, resolved to get a place built to receive lunatics where there should be no concealment, and in 1792 "The Retreat" at York was opened. It was run without the use of mechanical restraints; patients were humanely treated and given occupations.<sup>1</sup> The experiment aroused interest both in England and abroad. Other asylums also introduced more humane methods, notably Lincoln and Hanwell. Improvements depended on the interest and devotion of a few interested persons, sometimes, as at York, a private citizen, sometimes, as at Hanwell, the medical superintendent. All the evidence goes to show, however, that good treatment was the exception, and that in general conditions were beyond description. The full extent of this horror was disclosed by investigations by Select Committees of the House of Commons which took place in 1815, 1816, and 1827. The indifference of members of Parliament was shaken. An Act of 1808 permitted justices in quarter sessions to provide for the erection of asylums to receive pauper lunatics. Although the use made of this Act was limited, it led to provision being made in a number of counties, and thereby enabled the authorities in those counties to separate lunatics from other paupers.

Segregation, however, was but a small part of the problem that had to be tackled. Inspection was desirable, and it was not only pauper lunatics who were in need of protection from a supervisory authority. A Bill was introduced into the House of Commons designed to transfer authority for inspection to Commissioners to be appointed by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, and to extend to all licensed madhouses. The measure passed the House of Commons, but was thrown out by the House of Lords, their Lordships once again manifesting hostility to radical reform of the treatment of the insane. The first effective Act was that of 1828, brought in by Robert Gordon, later to be one of the first Commissioners in Lunacy. This Act

<sup>1</sup> Tuke. *Op. cit.* p. 108.

empowered Commissioners within the metropolitan district, and Justices in quarter sessions throughout the provinces, to license all houses receiving two or more lunatics, to visit, and to liberate any patients they considered to be confined without due cause.

No impressive improvements took place for some years. The next important landmark was the establishment by an Act of 1845 of the Commissioners in Lunacy. The Commissioners, who were physicians, surgeons, or barristers of not less than five years' standing, held office under the Lord Chancellor. They superseded the Metropolitan Commissioners, although for the time being responsibility for lunatics in the provinces remained with the Justices. A report of 1847 gives a summary picture of conditions at the time, a picture less gruesome than that of earlier years, but showing that the insane had not aroused the sympathy shown for certain other unfortunate groups in the country. "Beyond the pale of the medical profession, the condition of the Insane has attracted the attention only of a few individuals, who have undoubtedly, with great zeal, and in the face of many obstacles, repeatedly urged the necessity of some legislation on the subject ; and indeed it is mainly owing to their persevering efforts that the present provisions in favour of Lunatics exist." <sup>1</sup> So runs the report. At the time there were known to be 23,000 persons of unsound mind (excluding imbeciles) of whom 5,000 were from the "higher and middle classes" and the rest paupers. The Commissioners found that public asylums were in advance of the rest. "The funds by which they are raised and supported, and the causes which influence those who have control over them, necessarily give them a superiority over private establishments." <sup>2</sup>

The creation of the Commissioners, and the information provided by their reports, led to a number of improvements and some legislation. The number of county and borough asylums grew, though pauper lunatics were still placed in

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy*. P.P. 1847-8, vol. xxxii, p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 441.

licensed houses which took in both private and pauper lunatics and were run as a speculation by the proprietors, and many remained in the ordinary workhouses. An Act of 1862 provided that the cost of maintenance of pauper lunatics could be cast on the common fund of the poor-law union, instead of on the particular parish to which the lunatic belonged, and an Act of 1874 provided state contribution on a *per capita* basis for the maintenance of paupers in county or borough asylums, a provision which gave concrete encouragement to transfer this class of lunatic from workhouse wards and from private licensed houses. The Secretary of the Commissioners in Lunacy, giving evidence before the Select Committee on the Lunacy Laws in 1877, said that on 1st January of the previous year there were 57,407 pauper lunatics, of which 7,509 were in private licensed houses, 15,000 in workhouses, and the remainder in county or borough asylums.

The main concern of the legislature and of the Commissioners was to prevent wrongful detention, abuse of property, and abuse of the person of the lunatic. Throughout the century, and into the twentieth century, there is no evidence that mental ill-health aroused any interest as a social or human problem.

Towards the very end of the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century, the medical profession began to take an interest in mental conditions. The movement started on the Continent. As soon as nervous disorders became a subject of serious study, the first breach in the wall of popular prejudice was made. The new attitude did not penetrate the British Isles for some considerable time. The war of 1914-1918 undoubtedly increased awareness of the significance of nervous disorders and mental conditions. In the period between the two wars a change came about in public attitudes and in the provision made for sufferers from mental disorders and neuroses. The stigma attached to insanity and to lesser forms of mental disturbance became less pronounced. The change came about slowly, partly through the dissemination of knowledge, partly through changes in method and administration. The Royal



Commission on Lunacy of 1926 prepared the way for the Mental Treatment Act of 1930. This Act established the principle of admission of patients to mental hospitals as "voluntary" patients, that is to say without certification. Further, it laid the foundation for extra-mural psychiatric services as they now exist, by empowering local authorities to establish clinics. The impetus given by the Act is shown by the growth in the number of clinics after 1930.

The development of mental health services is still far from complete, and the geographical distribution of existing clinics is uneven. In general it may be said that foundations are laid, and that the old prejudices are rapidly dying. In this context it is always significant when there is change in terms used to describe a social institution or service. For instance, to obliterate the stigma associated with the term "poor law" the term "public assistance" was substituted. Some authorities, discontented with "public assistance," call the departments which perform public assistance duties a "social welfare department," and the officer who executes the duties a "social welfare officer." The stigma which attaches itself to a term normally arises from social experience. It is, therefore, an index of healthy administration or enlightened public attitudes when a social institution or service retains its nomenclature and its esteem in the minds of those served, even though its functions may relate to an inherently painful experience. It has not been found necessary to adopt a euphemism for a mortuary, or for a fracture clinic. In 1913, functions formerly performed by the Commissioners in Lunacy were transferred to a body known as the Board of Control. The functions of the Commissioners in Lunacy extended beyond lunatics, to those covered by the Mental Deficiency Acts, and the change in name was justified. The term "madhouse" went out of currency in the nineteenth century, and was supplanted by "asylum," an expression which implied refuge. The conditions in asylums were such that stigma rapidly attached itself to the term, which has been supplanted by "mental hospital." It is to be hoped that the

conditions in these institutions are such that no further alteration in terminology will be required.

Looking back over the history of the treatment of the mentally sick, it is apparent that ignorance and public indifference were the initial obstacles to improvement. The introduction of greater humanity in the treatment, even the inadequate treatment, of those suffering from mental disorders had to wait upon the efforts of a few enlightened individuals who enlisted the power of the state. No general improvement could have been brought about without introduction of measures for the protection from abuse of those in institutions. On the other hand these measures, whilst they put a stop to the brutal practices common in the earlier years of the nineteenth century, were insufficient of themselves. The superstitious horror of mental disorder was a phenomenon which could only be dispersed by knowledge. Scientific study of the mental sciences is a recent growth, the full benefits of which have not yet been experienced. In this sphere, as in others, improvement depends on the growth of knowledge, the application of knowledge, the work of pioneers, the partnership of experts and administrators, and enlightened public administration.

*Survey*

Those improvements in public health and medicine which increased the expectation of life accentuated the social problem of age. Old people were faced with the problem of how to subsist without becoming a burden on their children. In past centuries the pious and the charitable endowed a considerable number of almshouses and created many small pensions. Many of these charities were either local in application or restricted to specific occupational groups ; moreover they were unevenly distributed throughout the country, and their scope was inadequate to meet the needs of the growing number of old people. Large numbers of the aged poor had to have recourse to the poor law. Until 1870 large numbers of old people who were capable of looking after themselves were granted out-relief, but thereafter many Boards of Guardians applied the workhouse test, and the aged had to submit to the cold discipline of the institution. The problem was not solved by deterrent methods. As soon as more scientific methods were applied to analysis of problems of poverty, and the constant burden of the aged on the poor law became apparent, the desirability of a more humane and nation-wide solution was accepted. Age is a calculable risk, well suited to the application of insurance. After the initial Old Age Pension Act was passed, the struggle was to ensure that benefits should be adequate to needs ; this struggle was of long duration. The National Insurance Act of 1946 has virtually solved the problem of age as a cause of poverty. There are, however, other conditions than indigence associated with growing old. Those who retire from active employment need occupation ; some supervision is desirable for those who, though feeble, are still able to live in their own homes, and provision must be made for those no longer fit to

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care for themselves. The state has accepted responsibility for seeing that the aged shall not be needy ; there are, however, limits to the obligations which can be undertaken by a nation with an ageing population. Claims of various sections of the community must be weighed one against the other, and it is an unwise nation which sacrifices the welfare of its young to that of their grand-parents. A majority of old people wish to be independent and wish to be useful ; the task of helping them and of providing them with suitable amenities is one that is well suited to fulfilment by voluntary bodies. The considerable annual yield of existing endowments could be used to better advantage than at present, and should be adequate for the purpose. The problem of old age has shifted from poverty to welfare. The right solutions have not yet been defined, and voluntary bodies have scope for improvisation, an activity in which they frequently excel.

In the nineteenth century, health, like old age, was regarded as a personal concern. The poor were expected to provide by thrift for life's natural emergencies. For those who failed, there was the poor law. Public health was concerned in the main with sanitary measures, including preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Promotion of physical and mental health had to await the growth of knowledge ; the application of that knowledge depended on the proficiency of the medical and nursing professions and the development of an adequate machinery of public health administration. The burden of the sick on the poor law was considerable. Sickness, like old age, is a calculable risk which lends itself to insurance. The introduction of national health insurance decreased the burden on the rates, but the absence of dependents' allowances before 1946 resulted in but a partial remedy to the poverty arising from sickness.

The development of statutory provision for the sick was a slow process. The most notable contribution of voluntary effort was the provision through district nursing associations of a domiciliary nursing service, which not only covered most of

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England, but also attained a high standard through the work of the Queen's Institute. In the sphere of public health, as in other social services, it was often the voluntary body which demonstrated a need, improvised a service, and helped to awaken the public awareness. The field is essentially one for professional experts, and many of these were amongst the pioneers.

Emphasis of public policy on the promotion of health rather than on the treatment of disease is recent. The full implications of this attitude in provision of a comprehensive health service have still to be worked out. The Act of 1946 established new duties, but the quality of the service will depend on the way the details are worked out by the local health authorities and by the professions concerned. In matters of health much depends on public attitudes. The history of the slow break-down of superstition in the treatment of mental illness is but one illustration of this fact. In the education of public opinion, voluntary bodies have performed a valuable function. It is only in recent years that statutory bodies have concerned themselves seriously with this kind of propaganda. One phase is ended ; the character of its successor is still to be formed.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CHARITY

Charity, a word which at one time described a moral virtue, has grown to signify giving alms, or provision for the needy through voluntary gifts of money, services, or institutions. Many charities originated in the impulse of an individual or group of individuals to meet an observed need of their indigent fellow citizens, an impulse which may or may not have been schooled by an attempt to analyse the cause and extent of that need. Thus a charity can never be an adequate substitute for general provision for a common need. Some charities are run by a person or group of persons who collect monetary contributions from those sympathetic to the cause, and run the concern without undue formality. This kind of charity was common in the past and served to meet a local need. Other charities are financed mainly or wholly from endowments, and their objects are defined in the legal documents associated with the endowment; others have become legally incorporated, and their constitution and purposes also are defined. All these types have played an important part in the history of philanthropy in England.

After the dissolution of the monasteries in England, it was necessary for the state not only to undertake relief functions formerly executed by the Church, but also to take some cognisance of the nature and functions of charities. In the reign of Elizabeth an Act was passed, called the Statute of Charitable Uses, which defined charity by gathering under one miscellaneous class the actual forms in which men had bestowed their property. The range was wide and included such objects as the redemption of captives, support of the indigent, provision of education, and the care and training of orphans.<sup>1</sup> Between 1572 and 1692

<sup>1</sup> Gray, E. Kirkman. *A History of English Philanthropy* (1905), pp. 35-36.

there were as many as 46 bequests devoted to setting the idle poor to work.<sup>1</sup> Interest was less in poverty as a social problem than in its effects on persons in a locality. In the eighteenth century distinction was made between various kinds of distress. The records of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor, a society which flourished at the end of the century and in the early years of the nineteenth century, contains accounts of various philanthropic enterprises, and comments on how relief should be given. In a report on ladies' schools at Leeds, Thomas Bernard, who edited a report dated 1803, remarked that charity should not be indiscriminate, although this afforded self-gratification. "True charity is *prospective*. It looks to the AMENDMENT of the poor. It directs its efforts to the education of the young,—to the recovery of the sick,—the reform of the dissolute,—and the employment of the idle and unoccupied. The first of these is, of all charities, the most productive of good effects and the least liable to objection. But it should not supersede the others; nor yet should it exclude the *duty* of comforting, assisting, and protecting the aged, the helpless, and the afflicted."<sup>2</sup> The schools he proceeds to describe were supported by subscriptions and directed by an annually elected committee chosen from among the subscribers. Five schools of industry put fifty girls to work, provided each with a frugal outfit of clothes each year, provided the neighbourhood "with some good female servants" and "preserved several hundreds of children from ignorance and profligacy." There were innumerable small local charities throughout the country. Some schemes were on a much larger scale, and there were no rigid lines of demarcation between voluntary effort, public effort, and voluntary effort which sought public aid. In 1756 Parliament made a grant of £10,000 towards the Foundling Hospital, stipulating that the hospital should receive all children offered to it, a policy which led to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor* (1805), vol. iv, pp. 93-94.

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the admission of 5,510 children in eighteen months, and which had to be abandoned.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is no means of estimating the number of small charities supported by voluntary contributions, considerably more is known about endowed charities. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was suspicion that some funds were misapplied, and an Act of 1812 required trustees to register with the Clerk of the Peace for the county the capital, income, and objects of charities, the name of the trustees and of the person holding the instrument of endowment. Since there was no penalty for non-registration, compliance depended on the good-will of those concerned. Reformers saw that no useful fresh legislation could be devised without preliminary investigation. Accordingly in 1818 an Act was passed appointing a Commission to inquire into charities. For twenty years the Commissioners journeyed from county to county, examining instruments of endowment, questioning local people, and carefully recording their findings which fill many volumes and give a clear picture of the kinds of charity which survived from the past. There were many small endowments for the provision of money, gifts, clothes, and coal for the poor, doles to be distributed at the church porch, pensions and small almshouses for the aged, marriage portions, and educational endowments which ranged from small sums to provide for one or two poor scholars to be taught to read and write, to liberal foundations for schools. The reports revealed the extent of charitable endowment, its purpose and geographical distribution, as well as the manner of administration. Unfortunately their terms of appointment precluded the Commissioners from making a general report, nor did the select committee which considered their findings in 1835 offer any general review. The full significance of their work emerged only after the establishment of the Charity Commission in 1853.

Of 28,840 charities investigated, 13,331 enjoyed incomes of not more than £5 a year, and 4,641 of more than £5 but less

<sup>1</sup> Gray, E. Kirkman. *Op. cit.* p. 160.



than £10. Only 129 had an annual income of upwards of £1,000.<sup>1</sup> The total annual income of 31,195 charities was just under £2,000,000 ; by 1884 there had been a further 4,805 endowments with an annual income of £227,000.<sup>2</sup> Of these sums in 1876 over £1,000,000 was devoted to the poor in the shape of distribution of doles, food, coal, almshouses, apprenticeships ; £646,000 to education ; £199,000 to medical charities. Geographical distribution was uneven, and as was to be expected, the older centres of distribution were the main beneficiaries. Although some bequests could not be traced and some had been abused, many trustees carried out their obligations conscientiously, even though a number disbursed considerable sums on administration and on dinners at which they discussed trust business. A select committee reporting on the Commissioners' labours was of opinion that disbursement of so large an aggregate annual income was a matter of national concern, and recommended that a permanent Charity Commission should be set up with wide powers which should include superintendence and control of charities, the right to examine accounts, to dismiss incapable officers, and to suggest to trustees the best ways of promoting the objects of their trusts. This was the period of the Poor Law Amendment Act, when a number of people held strong views of the kind of benefits that the poor should properly receive, and particularly decried "indiscriminate charity" of the kind typified by doles and free gifts of clothes and food. Yet the committee's recommendations were too radical to gain general support, and it was not until 1853 that the Charity Commission was established, with powers considerably less extended than those suggested in 1835. One of the more immediate causes of the Act was the difficulty and expense which accompanied legal proceedings in relation to charitable endowments. A large number of cases of malversation of

<sup>1</sup> *First Report of the Commissioners for Enquiring into those cases which were Investigated, and Reported upon, by the Charity Commissioners, but not certified to the Attorney-General.* P.P. 1850, vol. xx, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Select Committee on Charitable Trusts Acts.* P.P. 1884, vol. ix, p. 5.

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funds had been referred to the Attorney-General by the inquiry commissioners, and on each case years of litigation had ensued; on an average suits lasted from five to ten years and a large amount of charitable funds were swallowed up in the process.<sup>1</sup> Similarly the business of altering the purpose of an endowment, even when the original purpose was obsolete, was vastly complicated and expensive. These facts were emphasised in the report of a commission which was published in 1850. The establishment of the Charity Commission in 1853 facilitated the collection of much valuable data and in due course a body of legislation grew up, relating to the control of charities. From the point of view of the law, a charity is "a grant of property in trust for the benefit of the public, or of some class of the public, not necessarily for the benefit of the poor."<sup>2</sup> Charities are required to make annual returns of their accounts to the Charity Commissioners, who are empowered to make inquiries where there is suspicion of any misappropriation of funds. They were empowered to draw up schemes to devote the funds of obsolete charities to educational purposes, and thus there were eliminated numbers of small charities providing doles in money and kind for the poor, marriage portions, or money for the redemption of captives. In the course of their duties the Commissioners assembled a great deal of information about existing charities. Some endowments had increased disproportionately in value in the passage of time, and before the law was altered trustees had no means of widening the scope of benefactions without taking the matter to the Court of Chancery, a procedure so expensive that it could only be resorted to where large sums were involved. An example of this kind was a charity endowed by Lady Campden in 1629 to provide apprenticeship for poor boys and doles to be distributed from the church porch in the village of Kensington. The annual value of the endowment had been £10. But Kensington ceased

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Select Committee on Charitable Trusts Acts*. P.P. 1884, vol. ix, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Anson, Sir W. R. *The Law and Custom of the Constitution* (1935), vol. ii, Part I, p. 227.

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to be a village and became part of London; site values rose and by the middle of the nineteenth century the annual value of the endowment had risen to £2,200. The parish was wealthy and the income was disproportionate to the number and needs of the poor. In this instance the trustee took the case to court, and as a result the purpose of the charity was changed. The Charity Commissioners had the power to propose new schemes, and those charities whose annual incomes did not exceed £100 were not entitled to oppose them. By 1884 the commissioners had framed upwards of 4,000 schemes the bulk of which affected charities with annual incomes under £50.<sup>1</sup> They diverted sums previously spent on "doles" to objects more in keeping with the needs and views of the time, such as medical charities or making contributions towards annuities for the provident indigent aged. When the Commissioners revised the structure of governing bodies, it was their custom to provide for representation on the trust of a representative of the local municipal authority.

One of the facts revealed in the Commissioners' annual reports was the condition of the City charities, a condition serious enough to call for the appointment of a commission of inquiry. City parishes were rich in endowments, but the population had decreased. Whereas in 1861 the population within the square mile was 112,063, by 1871 it had diminished to 74,897. The net annual charity revenue was £81,014. The condition of the parishes had changed radically. "Nearly one-half of these parishes, each once containing a dense industrial and trading population, whose religious and social institutions and feelings identified it with the locality, are now without inhabitants other than a few clerks and caretakers in charge of the great commercial buildings and warehouses, to make room for which the dwellings of the earlier population had been removed. . . . The whole area of one parish is stated to have been absorbed by the Bank of England, and about three-fourths of another

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Select Committee on Charitable Trusts Acts.* P.P. 1884, vol. ix, p. 6.

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by the General Post Office.”<sup>1</sup> Part of the parish charities went in alms, part in pensions. “Though the grant of pensions is a less objectionable form of charity (than alms) in itself, it evidently affords opportunities for making provision from these trusts for persons whose past services entitle them to such consideration from their own employers.”<sup>2</sup> There had been considerable mismanagement, and the accounts submitted to the Charity Commissioners were frequently imperfect. As a result of the findings of the commission, there was a complete reorganisation of the City charities on a sound basis.

The Charity Commissioners continue to exercise their supervision and to issue their annual reports. In 1916 the War Charities Act required the registration of war charities. The number of these grew continually, “mainly due to the promotion of some small charities with objects apparently adequately attained by other charities already on the register.”<sup>3</sup> But the Act did not permit refusal of registration on those grounds. In 1938 the total number of separate charities in England and Wales rendering accounts to the Charity Commissioners was 42,790.<sup>4</sup>

The growth of the supervision of charities is a significant chapter in the social history of the nineteenth century. Endowments were considerable; proper administration of the funds was recognized as a national responsibility.

The question arises of how far existing supervision of endowed charities is inadequate. Inevitably as time passes and public services improve, some needs which appeared pressing and unrecognized at the time a benefaction was made diminish in importance. The way in which this situation has arisen in regard to provision for aged persons has already been described; the old still need help, but help of a different kind from that

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Royal City Parochial Charities Commission*. P.P. 1880, vol. xx, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, 1934*, Cmd. 4857, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Annual Report of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, 1938*, Cmd. 5992, p. 5.

which they required at a time when retirement and old-age pensions were either non-existent or inadequate. If the National Health Service becomes efficient and inclusive, the same situation may arise in relation to charities for the sick, and this group may have more pressing needs than, for instance, the number of small convalescent homes endowed for their reception. On the other hand an over-extensive public control of endowed charities might discourage people from making bequests. A reasonable solution would be for there to be a periodic review of endowed charities and their resources in the light of contemporary needs, and the establishment of an advisory body drawn from voluntary and public bodies well acquainted with current needs, to recommend to the Charity Commissioners when they considered a charitable object had become obsolete, or when the object of benefactors could be better met by a slight or fundamental redirection of funds for the benefit of the same category of person for whom the original benefaction was intended.

It is sometimes deplored that new charities may be founded to meet a need which is already adequately provided for, or which duplicate existing organisations. Overlapping amongst charities is undesirable because of the waste of resources involved and because of difficulties created for those to be aided in finding out to which organisation to make application. Yet no form of compulsory co-ordination is desirable. A charitable act is essentially a private act, a free-will gift or bequest for an object which appeals to the donor. The private citizen is free to dissipate his resources as he chooses. It is no doubt in recognition of this principle that the Charity Commissioners have not been given the right to refuse to register charities which duplicate the functions of existing organisations. Regimental and other service charities, charities for the blind, continue to increase in number. A considerable amount of overlapping undoubtedly arises through the ignorance of promoters of the scope of existing societies or through a desire to reach a similar end by a different form of administration. Avoidance of overlapping of one charity with another and of charities with public services can

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best be promoted through the action of voluntary bodies. If state intervention is required, it should come in response to requests from voluntary bodies.

In London in the nineteenth century the need for the organisation of charity found recognition in the work of the Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity, later known as the Charity Organisation Society, now renamed the Family Welfare Association. This society was established in 1869 "with a view to bringing about co-operation between administrators of charitable relief and the poor-law authorities, and amongst the various charities, and to rendering charitable relief effectual towards its main object—the cure, as distinguished from the mere alleviation, of distress."<sup>1</sup> During the latter part of the century the society attracted membership of many able and distinguished persons and was responsible for much valuable work. A manual published in 1872 sets out clearly its objects and methods. Co-operation with poor-law authorities was sought by the formation of a committee within every poor-law district, and by securing membership of a member of the local board of guardians on the society's district committee. The society was a federation of district committees. All applications for assistance were carefully investigated, and co-operation of various charities was sought to ensure that the most suitable agency should be solely responsible for each case.<sup>2</sup> Subscribers were granted no special privileges; the society operated on a merit system.

The society distinguished between what they considered to be the respective functions of charity and of the poor law. "The function of Charity should be to prevent destitution: that of the Poor Law to relieve it."<sup>3</sup> They gave temporary assistance to those who their careful and thorough inquiry

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1874). Paper read by Mr. Bosanquet, p. 898.

<sup>2</sup> *Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity, Manual* (1872).

<sup>3</sup> *On the Best Means of dealing with Exceptional Distress*. Report of a Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society (1889), p. x.

proved to be persons of "good character" capable of being restored to a condition of self-support; they dispensed a moralistic charity to the provident and "deserving" poor. They tried to suppress mendicity by urging Londoners to refer beggars to the society's district office, and kept a careful record of known fraudulent begging-letter writers. The *Annual Charities Digest*, still published every year, provides an invaluable guide to those of the hundreds of existing voluntary bodies selected by the society. With the break-up of the poor law, the growth of public services, and a changed public attitude to social problems, the society's functions were decreasingly concerned with co-operation between voluntary and statutory bodies.

The growth of diverse charities is one aspect of the private citizen's desire to participate in schemes for mitigating social maladjustments or helping groups or individuals in need. Most of the earlier movements were promoted and run by those who enjoyed social and economic security, for the benefit of those who did not. The pattern of organisation reflected the contemporary class structure. In the earlier years of the century numbers of dilettante charitable bodies flourished which provided local occupation for ladies and gentlemen of leisure and conferred limited benefits on the recipients without solving any social problems. The charitable were distinct from social reformers who sought the solution of defined problems by means calculated to strike at their roots. Now and then the charitable associated themselves with social reformers. Thus Lady Byron, who dabbled in "good works" after her separation from Lord Byron, became intimately acquainted with Mary Carpenter, and in 1834 opened and became manager of a school at Ealing for boys "of the vagrant class."<sup>1</sup> She also paid for a young man to go to Switzerland to study the methods used there in a school for neglected children which was conducted by one of Pestalozzi's pupils.

<sup>1</sup> Mayne, E. C. *Life and Letters of Anne Isabella, Lady Noel Byron* (1929), p. 330.

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Philanthropy, in fact, became fashionable, provided always that its objects were respectable ; if they were dubious, it led to ostracism. Thus when the graceful and accomplished Jeannie Nassau Senior, who in 1874 became the first woman to be appointed inspector of workhouses, took interest in the fate of young servant girls, gave them help, and founded the Association for Befriending Young Servants, virtuous society ladies not only refused to receive her, but forbade the mention of her name in their presence ; for it was far from uncommon for these girls to have illegitimate babies, and illegitimacy was one of the facts which the respectable preferred to ignore.<sup>1</sup> Happily the ladies' husbands showed more sense.

To bring about reforms, co-operation was needed between those actively engaged in social work, those who studied social problems, and those in a position to bring necessary measures before Parliament. It was also necessary to educate public opinion. These objects were furthered by the formation in 1857 of the Association for the Promotion of Social Science, which sought to collect facts, to diffuse knowledge and to stimulate inquiry. The Association was divided into sections dealing with law amendment, education, public health, prevention and repression of crime, and social economy. Congresses were held each year at different cities, the sections reported and papers were read. From year to year most of the people well known for their work or writing about social questions addressed the conference. Mary Carpenter, who was amongst the founders, always took an active part in the proceedings. In its third year the Association had 666 members and 891 associates, and even eighteen years later, when meetings had become rather dull, some 1,000 tickets for the annual congress were issued. This task of propaganda, and of bridging the gulf between practical social workers and those in a position to influence legislation both inside Parliament and from without was particularly important at a period when public social services were gradually increasing in number and scope and the organised

<sup>1</sup> Chapman, R. *The Laurel and the Thorn* (1945), p. 61.



study of the social sciences was virtually non-existent ; moreover the innumerable voluntary bodies lacked co-ordinating organisations, and social workers had little opportunity of hearing of fresh developments, of discussing or hearing discussed the fundamental principles upon which their work rested. Academic study of the social sciences was not at the time even embryonic.

Although some voluntary organisations, such as the Ragged School Union, were antipathetic to state action or to co-operation with statutory bodies, in general the importance of such co-operation was recognized. The Association for the Promotion of the Social Sciences set out to promote legislation ; the Charity Organisation Society, whilst differentiating between the functions of the poor law and that of private charity, desired close co-operation with poor-law authorities. It was not until public social services assumed a paramount importance that voluntary bodies began to show a certain hostility to state action.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a fresh factor arose in the consideration of social problems ; whilst many groups continued to be activated primarily by charitable and philanthropic impulses, and they approached their work in the same kind of spirit that dominated those who came before them, others adopted an analytical approach, which signified the beginning of the application of scientific method to the consideration of social questions. In 1889 Charles Booth (1840-1916) published the first of seventeen volumes of his famous "Life and Labour of the People of London," a work based on detailed inquiry which was recognized immediately as an important work in descriptive statistics. Beatrice Webb was amongst those who helped him to collect his data. The book analysed in detail the income and occupations of Londoners, revealing that 30 per cent. of all Londoners were living below what was then accepted as the poverty line, and establishing the relationship for instance between old age and poverty. In 1895 the London School of Economics and Political Science was founded, which in 1900 became a college of the University of London ; from its inception the School promoted the study of the social sciences. The effect

of this new approach was reflected in both the majority and minority reports of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1905-1909, which were concerned as much with diagnosis of the causes of poverty as with the question of what to do with destitute persons.

The importance of this new development can hardly be exaggerated. Previously, the existence of social problems was usually brought to public notice by those who had an urge to solve them. The devices adopted depended on the qualities of intelligence, vision, and administrative acumen of the promoters. Some few combined these qualities to a remarkable degree; but qualities of head and heart are by no means usually found in association. The need for experience was recognized before the need for knowledge, and some kind of training was provided for workers in a few voluntary societies. This training was related to the task to be done, but the task to be done was not related by the training to fundamental questions of social structure. At the beginning of the twentieth century a few people began to perceive the value of such a relationship. Thereafter there were two developments: the growth of the study of economics, sociology, and allied social sciences as academic subjects, a growth which made possible the application of statistical and analytic methods in the whole field; and the growth of schemes of vocational training for those engaged in social work which included theoretical and practical training and which led to various forms of social work becoming the occupation of salaried trained professional workers, rather than the unpaid work of volunteers. The value of employing this trained personnel was recognized first by voluntary bodies, and then by the more progressive local authorities. The state has been slow to follow suit, except in services such as probation, which were taken over from voluntary organisations. The Civil Service structure did not lend itself to recruitment of such persons and only the greater flexibility brought about by the second world war led departments to use trained social workers to any considerable extent.

## ENGLISH SOCIAL SERVICES

A significant change in terminology has come about in relation to the kind of activities which used to be described as charitable or philanthropic, and were concerned with providing institutions or services for the under-privileged by self-appointed groups of persons of assured means ; the current expression is voluntary social service. The nature of voluntary social services and of voluntary bodies is as varied as that of the earlier charities, but the social structure in which they operate is changed. The growth of public services provided by local authorities has enormously increased opportunities for citizen participation in the management of institutions and services. The power to co-opt members who are not local councillors on to statutory committees permits experienced persons who are interested in the services provided rather than in politics to serve in the public interest. The growth of professional forms of social work enables those with the necessary interest and ability to make such work a career. The increase in specialised knowledge of different social questions and the improvement in methods of studying them has necessarily changed the fields in which unspecialised persons can usefully participate.

In general the tendency is for essential services to become public services and for voluntary bodies to provide peripheral services, offering care or special service to restricted groups. The activities of some of the more recently founded voluntary bodies have widened to include promotion of objects calculated to enhance general well-being. Thus the National Council of Social Service, which was founded in 1919, devoted itself at first to promoting clubs for the unemployed. This was essentially a service to enhance the welfare of a markedly unprivileged section of the community. In due course the Council became interested in promoting community centres, in rural community councils, in the design of village halls, in encouraging co-operation amongst various bodies engaged in similar kinds of social work. During the war the Citizens Advice Bureaux, which helped the public to steer its course through the variety of special regulations and answered a wide range of query, were essentially a

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service offered to the general public irrespective of income. The Council sought and received considerable sums of money from public authorities in support of certain of its activities. Other voluntary bodies formed in the inter-war period fulfilled the specially valuable function of pioneering in fresh spheres and of preparing the way for the expansion of public services. Thus the Child Guidance Movement, which is concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of behaviour disorders in children, came into being as a result of voluntary effort. When the success of the experiment was established, public funds were made available; in due course the number of clinics spread and slowly the local education authorities learnt to appreciate the value of the work.

*Survey*

England has been rich in charitable endowments for many centuries. The survey of charities carried out in the early nineteenth century revealed that the total annual income from endowments was considerable although a majority of the trusts were small and local. In the absence of any public supervisory body, there was some misappropriation of funds. The main difficulty, however, arose from the rigidity of a legal system that made the procedure for altering the object of an endowment expensive and lengthy ; as a result there survived a large number of charities devoted to objects which were no longer useful and had grown obsolete with the years. The Charitable Trusts Acts and the establishment of the Charity Commission led to the adjustment of those charities which no longer served a useful purpose and provided supervision of accounts. The number of separate charities continues to increase. The Charity Commissioners have no power to prevent duplication ; co-ordination is a matter for voluntary action.

Charitable and philanthropic bodies did much in the nineteenth century to supplement public provision and to promote social action. Towards the end of the century the development of the application of scientific method and the growth of academic study of the social sciences brought about a change in outlook on social questions. People began to appreciate the importance of diagnosis, of analysing the causes of poverty and other social maladjustments, and of taking measures to prevent their occurrence. Whilst pioneer bodies demonstrated ways of dealing with certain problems and initiated new services, it was inevitable that the development of a more positive analytic attitude to social questions, an attitude which encouraged emphasis on prevention of social ills, should lead to realisation of the need

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for expansion of public services. All citizens can avail themselves without loss of dignity of services provided for all on equal terms, whether these services are directed to meeting emergencies, to providing against poverty, or to enriching social living. It is undoubtedly true that from the consumers' point of view there is a certain humiliation in accepting aid from private bodies. The fact that the administration of many public services became the duty of local authorities has given the electorate a responsibility towards them, a responsibility appropriate in a democratic country. It has provided opportunities for service, and of service divested of patronage.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

Most of the services described in the foregoing pages had their origin at a time when the economic, social, and administrative structure was in a state of flux. Need tended constantly to outstrip provision, and there was no general acceptance of the idea that it was the duty of the state to improve the conditions of the poorer classes. Yet Parliament, before its reform in 1832, was concerned about administrative abuses. From the time of the appointment in 1780 of Commissioners to inquire into public offices, a number of measures were passed to eliminate abuses and make government departments more efficient. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in the same period inquiries took place into the conduct of charitable trusts and of madhouses. The technique of inquiry was better developed than the machinery for dealing with any abuses which might be discovered ; moreover the unreformed House of Commons showed little will to effective action in the sphere of social administration. The period was characterised by small-scale enterprise in philanthropy, as in business. Of the many charities founded at the time, few had a long life. Yet the many and varied philanthropic activities served to give men and women their apprenticeship in social work.

Methods used were necessarily purely empiric, for there was little factual data upon which to exercise organised thought. The first census was not taken until 1801 ; hence there was no adequate basis for an analytic approach to contemporary problems. The size of the population could only be guessed, so too the distribution of the various age groups, occupations, the average marriage age, and so forth. It was to be expected, in these circumstances, that people should be more preoccupied with symptoms than causes. It was clear, for instance, that

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pauperism was rife. Poor-law reformers of the eighteen-thirties were concerned to reduce pauperism, to tighten up the administration of relief in such a way that the poor would be discouraged from applying for it, rather than to reduce destitution. Acceptance of the principle of less eligibility, of ensuring that the condition of a pauper was in no way better than that of the poorest independent labourer, implied acceptance of the adequacy of contemporary wage rates. It occurred to none to judge these rates in the light of physiological needs ; nor were the medical sciences mature enough to allow such an assessment. Ignorance, however, was not the only obstacle to improvement of social conditions ; there was also the obstacle of contemporary morals. An adult was generally supposed to be morally responsible for the conditions in which he and his family existed. It was only where children were concerned that some people doubted the validity of this principle. Those who worked amongst children realised that the principle of less eligibility was not enough, that the general mixed workhouse did not offer the right training for vagrants or for orphans, that imprisonment was unlikely to prevent young delinquents from becoming adult criminals. Many moral prejudices had to be overcome before necessary reforms could be effected ; it took nearly half a century after the establishment of reformatory schools to abolish the provision that offenders should spend a preliminary fortnight in prison.

After 1832 the speed and effectiveness of social reform were accelerated by the improvement of central and local government institutions. Inspection was one of the most creative of nineteenth century administrative devices. It not only helped to enforce the law, but the inspector, visiting many similar institutions within his district, acquired a perspective unobtainable by other methods. In days when there were few specialised periodicals, and travel was slow and difficult, he helped to break down the isolation of those working in institutions who had little or no opportunity of meeting others engaged in similar work. School inspectors, reformatory inspectors, workhouse inspectors and



others played a quiet, anonymous, and invaluable part in the improvement of social services. Reports, sent at regular intervals to the responsible central department, were collated and formed the basis of annual reports which embodied available information, and provided statistical material and a thermometer of progress or regression. Gaps in existing provision were brought to light, as were also details in which legislation required amendment. Naturally not everyone welcomed the inspector; much depended on his personal ability, and on the friendliness or hostility of those he visited. It may, however, be noted that it was an inspector of schools, Mr. Fletcher, who persuaded Mary Carpenter to put into book form an account of her methods of dealing with children, and that the Rev. Sydney Turner, who ran the Philanthropic Society's school at Redhill, Surrey, so successfully, by becoming one of the first inspectors of reformatory and industrial schools, was able to make an invaluable contribution to the successful evolution of the system.

The development of the social services was influenced by the weaknesses as well as by the strengths of the system of public administration. The Civil Service during the whole of the nineteenth century was characterised by a rigid departmentalism. Until 1876 civil servants were recruited to particular departments, and were not transferable.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of a common service those in one department knew little of the work of those in other departments. Inter-departmental co-operation was poor. So there came into being inspectorates carrying on similar functions, but sharing no common standards—inspectors of education in poor-law schools or reformatory schools who knew nothing of the practices and standards in ordinary primary schools. When, in the twentieth century, departmentalism gave way to inter-departmental co-operation, most branches of social service benefited.

Absence of study of the social sciences, and of efforts to apply available knowledge to the solution of social problems,

<sup>1</sup> Cohen, E. W. *Growth of the British Civil Service* (Allen & Unwin, 1941), p. 135.

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were obstacles to success for many years. It was one of the notable characteristics of that remarkable pioneer Mary Carpenter that she paid constant attention to available facts. Her books and the evidence that she gave before various commissions of inquiry show how closely she followed statistical returns, the debates in Parliament, and reports of proceedings in the courts ; the information she collected made her criticisms the more trenchant. These intellectual qualities she shared with Florence Nightingale. Both women derived much of their emotional drive from religious impulses, but never ceased to use their brains ; both understood administration, the ways of the government, and determined to use all available means to gain their ends.

The universities of Oxford and Cambridge underwent reforms in the middle of the nineteenth century, and introduced examination systems ; from these universities came the new entrants to the Civil Service, normally recruited by competitive examination after 1870. It was these civil servants who prepared material and wrote reports for the innumerable royal commissions and inter-departmental inquiries, which usually preceded the introduction of social legislation. In accordance with British Civil Service tradition, they remained anonymous ; their contribution to the outcome is too often overlooked, with the consequence that the importance of the inter-relation of social reformers and public administrators is undervalued.

In a democracy, legislative action presupposes some degree of public interest, particularly in those measures which involve considerable public expenditure. It is not easy to assess the different influences which led to improvement and extension of the social services, improvements which began long before the extensions of the franchise in 1867 and 1884 and therefore cannot be regarded as responses to effective consumer demand. Administrative reformers like Lord Brougham, sanitary reformers like Edwin Chadwick, and social reformers like Mary Carpenter and Lord Shaftesbury had to awaken public interest and Parliamentary interest by constant propaganda ; it was necessary

to disturb the complacency of the public conscience. At that time agitation for social reforms came mainly from the middle classes, and in particular from amongst those in whom the nonconformist influence was strong. The workers at first looked to improvement from political action, from idealist schemes for creating a new form of society. Later they devoted their energies to creating effective trade unions to raise wages, limit hours and improve conditions of labour, to forming mutual-aid societies such as sick clubs and friendly societies, and, merging idealism with practical devices, to consumer co-operation.

The recorded proceedings of the annual congresses of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science are an interesting index of the topics which interested members at different times. One section showed sustained interest in such sanitary questions as water pollution and sewage disposal, questions fundamental to public health; the papers dealing with education reflected interest in both content and method. The Association watched sympathetically the various self-help movements of the time. Lord Brougham in 1860 warmly praised the rising co-operative movement; Lord Rosebery in his presidential address in 1874 drew attention to the benefits of the club and institute movement, claiming that there were at least 555 clubs in England Wales and 24 in Scotland. A speaker on the same subject in 1870 noted that the clubs were valuable in promoting discussion, that drinks were served as at middle and upper class clubs, working men having declared "that they would not go to the clubs supported by teetotallers, to be treated like children." Despite its title and varied interests, there remained a certain amateurishness about much of the Association's work. Whilst it provoked interest in social questions, it did not promote improvement in the techniques of studying them. That was, perhaps, a purpose beyond its scope.

By the end of the nineteenth century, education was ceasing to be the prerogative of a small and monied minority, and the subjects of academic study were widening. Oxford added to its

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schools, one for the natural sciences and one of law and modern history ; Cambridge developed the study of political economy and the natural sciences. London University, founded in 1836, was unhampered by the classical traditions and able to offer students a wide range of subjects. By 1895 twelve provincial towns had their university colleges, and in the final terms of 1894, 20,000 students were attending institutions for higher education in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> Secondary education was improving in quality, and the introduction of examinations helped to promote common standards. Universal compulsory education decreased illiteracy rapidly, and increased the appetite for knowledge. University extension, initiated in 1871 by Cambridge University, to be followed later by London, Oxford, and the new universities of the north, provided single lectures and courses in a large variety of subjects. Attendance for the year 1890, at 457 courses provided by Oxford, Cambridge, and London universities, totalled 44,118.<sup>2</sup> Ruskin College was founded in 1899 to extend the benefits of Oxford education to members of the working classes, and accepted students who had not had the advantages of a secondary education. There was, however, a public which sought education and had at the same time to carry on with the business of earning a living. In 1903 the Workers' Education Association was founded, which in due course received financial support from the local education authorities. This body organised classes in towns and villages throughout the country.

As knowledge increased and became better disseminated, as democratic institutions developed, assumptions of an earlier age were called into question. Groups came into being which desired to hasten and direct changes in social structure. The Fabian Society was founded in 1884 and worked for social changes, basing its proposals on carefully conducted research. Sixteen years later the Labour Party came into being, giving

<sup>1</sup> Halévy, E. *A History of the English People. Epilogue, 1895-1905* (1939 : Pelican edition), bk. 2, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28.

political expression to workers' aims, and seeking to achieve them through Parliamentary representation. \*

The social services continued to grow within this context of change, a context which required of them new developments and certain readjustments. Improved analysis of social problems made apparent the inadequacies of many palliative measures. In the best run societies children will become sick, but the incidence of sickness can be reduced by competent medical and maternity and child welfare services. Similarly, institutions must be provided for the care of delinquent children, but as the causes of delinquency are better understood, constructive measures will reduce the number of children who need to be sent to them. Positive preventive measures require for successful operation public services, available on equal terms to all who need them. A citizen service is a service which the individual utilizes without loss of dignity, and with the same freedom with which he makes use of public transport or of a municipal library. It must be free from any taint of patronage, for any element in its administration which mitigates against full freedom of usage is a threat to its efficacy. Public services cannot satisfy all social requirements. There remains a need for a number of differential services, directed to restricted groups. The way in which such services are best administered must depend on the kind of thing which has to be done, and the sort of individuals or groups for which it must be done. Of these differential services, some are accepted as a public responsibility. There is, for instance, a residual group whose poverty will not be prevented by social insurance; there are people with particular handicaps who need special forms of assistance.

It is in the sphere of differential services directed to special groups that voluntary bodies have been most active and in which their efforts have been most fruitful. A cursory glance at the Annual Charities Register and Digest shows their multiplicity and their variety of aim. Many hundreds have survived from the last century, and within our own times fresh bodies are constantly formed. The conditions within which they operate

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are very different from those of the past ; the social structure is changed, and with it social habits and distribution of wealth. Until the first world war there was a considerable leisured class from which a number of men and women could be counted upon to devote considerable time to voluntary social work, both as committee members and field workers. Although there were a number of career women before 1914, they were far fewer than to-day and many professions and occupations were closed to them. Women from the middle classes could be found who were educated, able, young, and prepared to work voluntarily either under the direction of a trained secretary or without such direction. There were men also who were prepared to sit on committees and to act as treasurers of voluntary bodies. But the society which produced such people came to a violent end during the war. The committees which are self-appointed found increasing difficulty in recruiting new members, and particularly members of middle age and below, a circumstance of greatest importance to those dealing with young people, for it is an exceptional old person who thinks of youth in terms outside those of his own childhood and who welcomes or accepts changing standards. On the other hand, post-war developments led to an increase in the number of people who wished to make of social work a profession and to equip themselves for their work at one or other of the university colleges which provided suitable courses. Many voluntary bodies were alive to the advantages of employing trained workers, and by so doing in no small degree compensated for the quality of their committees. They were, however, faced with another difficulty, that of finance. With restricted funds they offered extremely low salaries, setting a standard of poor remuneration for social work.

Whereas in the nineteenth century most voluntary bodies collected sufficient funds for their purposes without undue difficulty, to-day many have difficulty in securing what they need. There are still societies, such as the N.S.P.C.C., which remain fully voluntary, receiving no grants from public funds, but the contemporary tendency is for voluntary bodies to seek

grants either from local authorities or from government departments. Many have succeeded in so doing. The terms upon which such grants are made vary considerably. Inspection is by no means a universal condition. Sometimes submission of an account of the way in which the funds have been disbursed has been thought to provide adequate guarantee of proper use. Audit is a device to ensure honest spending ; it is not concerned with wise spending. Clearly more thought needs to be given to conditions of grant-aid, and it is arguable that they should always include the right of inspection, representation on appropriate committees, and stipulations about minimum salary scales.

Despite the prevalence of grant-aid, there has been a curious tendency amongst some voluntary bodies to express hostility towards the growth of public services and publicly operated social services, and for them to put forward somewhat extravagant claims for the inherent superiority of the "voluntary principle." These attitudes may be due in part to a sense of competition, in part to inadequate consideration of principles.

Looking at these questions in the light of the past and of contemporary developments, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions. Co-operation between voluntary and statutory bodies has been fruitful in achieving certain objects. It is clear that certain kinds of institutions, especially residential institutions, attain their objects better if they are conducted on a small scale with maximum informality, rather than on a large scale. In general, success or failure of institutions such as children's homes, approved schools, and hostels for young persons, depends upon the character and ability of the staff ; provided they are well chosen, are given sufficient latitude, and are not starved of equipment or overworked, the composition of the managing committee is of secondary importance. It is neither desirable nor necessary that institutions should be alike. The device of privately managed and publicly aided and inspected services of this nature has worked well, and has provided variety, thereby enabling authorities to select the kind of institution

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best suited to the needs of the individual child. What is most lacking is adequate methods of selection. That this lack is appreciated is shown by the recent establishment of a classifying school for boys in north-east England, from which they are sent to appropriate approved schools. Finally, the existence of these privately managed institutions is in no way incompatible with the co-existence of similar institutions managed by public authorities. In both cases, the test of success is the quality of the service and the degree to which their objects are fulfilled.

Voluntary bodies are active in certain spheres which are not considered to call for public action. Thus whilst the unmarried mother has the use of such public services as pre-natal and post-natal clinics, health visitor services, medical services including hospitalisation, and the assistance of the courts in securing an affiliation order, it was not until 1943 that the Ministry of Health advised welfare authorities to appoint a special worker, experienced in the problem and in the organisation and administration needed. For many years a number of denominational bodies were concerned with her welfare, and until recently have been the only workers in the field.

Sometimes there is controversy over the desirability of establishing a service, or over the form which it should take. It is generally accepted that it is desirable to combat the spread of venereal diseases ; publicly provided clinics exist in all areas, and the Ministry of Health has undertaken propaganda in recent years. Amongst the interested public there were for many years sharp differences of opinion on the best means of gaining the end in view. Some advocated the kind of propaganda which relies mainly on spreading knowledge of the effects of these diseases and upon moral suasion, others that there should be added to such propaganda dissemination of information about prophylactics. Partisans of the different points of view formed independent voluntary bodies. Some issues touch upon such strong sectional beliefs or prejudices that no public action is taken, and in default of voluntary effort a service remains unprovided. Contraception is such a topic. Hostility of certain



religious bodies to provision of contraceptive information was so strong that it was not until 1934 that public authorities were permitted to establish clinics, even under restrictive conditions. Voluntary bodies have provided clinics in London since 1921 and in some provincial towns since 1925, thereby filling a gap which could not otherwise have been fulfilled whilst public opinion remained as it was.

The way in which, in the past, voluntary bodies initiated new services, and by demonstrating their usefulness paved the way for more general provision, either by grant-aid or by public provision, has been illustrated in previous chapters. From time to time new voluntary bodies are formed and continue to fulfil this valuable function. Child guidance was introduced to Britain by such means in the inter-war period, and the number of clinics provided by local authorities has been increasing steadily. Recently the prevalence of broken marriages had led to the establishment of marriage guidance councils. These councils are available to those intending marriage and to those with marital difficulties ; they are still at an experimental stage, and have not operated over a long enough period for conclusions to be drawn about their effectiveness. The need for new forms of provision will always arise. Specialists in particular fields become aware of deficiencies in existing methods, of gaps in provisions, and of new possibilities, and where they have a sense of urgency, often find sections of the public ready to offer them financial backing before general opinion has moved far enough to secure the support of public authorities. Sometimes charitable trusts are prepared to finance experiments for a limited period, and schemes are therefore launched which serve the purpose of social laboratories. It was in this way that the Commonwealth Fund financed the London Child Guidance Clinic. Sometimes social surveys or research are subvented, and thus knowledge is extended. These activities are of the utmost value, and play an important part in the development of social services.

Evaluation of the respective merits of voluntary and public

## CONCLUSION

service depends to a considerable degree on personal bias. Merits of voluntary provision include ability to provide in advance of public opinion latitude derived from absence of supervision or regulation which permits the work to be adapted to individual needs. Since no one has a right to benefit from a voluntary or philanthropic service, there is no obligation to be consistent, since the fact that one applicant has received assistance in a given set of circumstances establishes no claim for another individual in similar circumstances. In propaganda there is a freedom for which no public body can hope, since the objects and methods depend entirely on the will of the controlling committee, which can be, and normally is, partisan. The only prejudices that have to be considered are those of the subscribers. These characteristics are at the same time their strength and their weakness.

Amongst the advantages of public provision, are consistency, and geographical completeness of coverage. A statutory service is available on equal terms to all throughout the length and breadth of the country. Nor are decisions about individual claims arbitrary. Responsibility is the essence of public service. There is often statutory provision for a machinery of appeal from decisions, of which the most obvious example is the tribunals which consider appeals arising from disallowance of unemployment benefit. Anyone who follows in *Hansard* the questions raised in Parliament about personal cases in such matters as pension grants can understand the extent of democratic safeguards. These facts show that a service which is intended to be available on equal terms to all citizens in defined circumstances should be publicly provided and administered. There are some services which local authorities have the power, though not an obligation, to provide. Where an authority exercises permissive powers, the service to quality for grant-aid must receive the approval of the appropriate government department. Many services have grown up in this way. The principles of administration are similar to those which exist for all public services. The democratic nature of local authorities provides a

public safeguard the effectiveness of which depends on the watchfulness or apathy of the electors.

Although the most important feature of a social service is the quality of what it does for those it serves, it cannot be overlooked that participation in this kind of work gives a number of people considerable satisfaction. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was characteristic of philanthropic and voluntary bodies that they should be conducted by people drawn from the middle classes and directed to those who did not belong to those classes; they were typical of the age in which they flourished, sharing its virtues and its vices, the peculiar mixture of patronage and public spirit. The work often had an educative effect upon those who took part in it. The expansion of public services and publicly administered social services has been coincident with the growth of democratic institutions; membership of the House of Commons ceased to be a class preserve and the powers and duties of local authorities increased. The fact that most public social services are administered by local authorities widened the scope for social service and included public-spirited men and women from all walks of life; it widened also the educative influence which accompanies such participation. Participation is not restricted to those who are active in local party politics, for membership of committees is not restricted to elected councillors. There are also innumerable opportunities for service as school managers and in connection with other institutions. Indeed it is incorrect to assume that the increased activity of statutory authorities in the sphere of the social services has decreased opportunities for voluntary service; the contrary is true. There is likely to be more difficulty in finding people with time to undertake the innumerable tasks which have to be performed than to find scope for those who wish to serve.

British democratic institutions, in contrast with those of some other great democracies, are characterised by the variety and breadth of opportunity for service by the ordinary citizen; this is something valuable and distinctive in our social structure.

## CONCLUSION

Specialist, administrator, and private citizen co-operate in running public and social services and the standard of service in any locality depends to a high degree on the quality of that co-operation. This is one aspect of democratic responsibility. Within this variety, maintenance and minimum standards are secured by government inspection. In the conduct of any form of enterprise, by whatsoever the directing body, there remain always dangers of complacency, of unawareness of deficiencies in existing provision, or resistance to new methods or fresh ideas. Constant vigilance is necessary, a preparedness to try new methods, to think out afresh solutions in the light of changed circumstances and increased knowledge. Whilst sound administrators do not get into mental backwaters, these backwaters are a constant menace, a menace which becomes most threatening in conditions of public indifference. Organisations and individuals help to stimulate public awareness by their work of experiment and propaganda. The value of such action was demonstrated recently when the question was raised of contemporary methods of caring for children deprived of their natural homes. Intelligent agitation led to officially sponsored inquiry, and inquiry to reorganisation of methods of supervision and revision of departmental responsibility.

Questions of social organisation are essentially practical questions, concerned with the best ways of attaining defined ends ; they are concerned with social needs and how to satisfy them, and social problems and how to solve them. The range of accepted responsibility is constantly changing. In many spheres we have moved from a phase of palliatives to a phase of constructive provision—for example, from concentrating on coping with disease to promoting health, from eliminating illiteracy to promoting education. As our ends change, so social institutions must be changed to meet them. In seeking solutions, there are still formidable impediments in the shape of fiercely-held prejudices, ignorance, and absence of adequate study. Such questions as how best to deal with a young person who sets fire to haystacks, or parents who habitually,

though without malice, neglect their children, or people who cannot hold down a job, are rarely dealt with in the same objective spirit with which people consider what to do about land which gets flooded, or an epidemic which spreads. There is still general suspicion of those social sciences which are concerned with the study of questions which affect our own society and way of life. We apply careful techniques to the study of habits and customs of primitive people but inadequate ones to the study of our own social organisation; we observe in other societies than our own conditions which make for hostility or co-operation, tension or good living, conformity to the cultural pattern or aberrance. Within our own society we too often tend to concentrate on symptoms rather than causes, to spend more energy in exhortation than in hard thinking, and we fail to use to the full the discipline of the social sciences as a means of diagnosis, and for the improvement of our social organisation and institutions.

The nineteenth century was a period of improvisation; the pioneers were of necessity empirical in their methods. Yet many of the more successful amongst them were careful in their observations, collected all available data on the questions which interested them, and were quick to apply the knowledge at their disposal. The twentieth century is sometimes described as a scientific age. In the sphere of the social sciences it has yet to prove its claim to this title.

# APPENDIX

## *Charities included in the Annual Charities Digest Register, 1944 \**

Decade of Foundation	Total	Sick	Aged	Disability	Education	Orphanages and Homes	Training Grants	Relief	Missions and Settlements	Clergy	Moral Welfare and Crime	Miscellaneous	Special Pensions Ex. Old Age	Temperance	Women	Children
1800-1809	24	7	7	—	2	2	—	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	3
1810-1819	31	7	—	—	7	1	—	1	1	3	1	—	—	—	—	8
1820-1829	34	10	5	—	5	1	—	2	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	6
1830-1839	43	9	6	1	7	2	—	1	1	2	2	—	—	—	—	5
1840-1849	67	18	6	2	5	5	—	3	3	4	7	2	3	—	—	12
1850-1859	147	23	8	6	11	12	1	4	—	3	32	2	—	3	3	36
1860-1869	174	51	8	6	9	19	2	9	2	2	20	6	2	1	1	36
1870-1879	171	52	2	10	6	14	—	6	3	4	19	6	1	1	12	35
1880-1889	189	50	5	5	10	14	2	13	15	2	25	8	—	—	2	38
1890-1899	169	60	1	11	12	8	1	7	5	2	12	13	2	1	3	31
1900-1909	95	26	—	12	2	3	—	7	6	1	—	15	—	—	2	21
1910-1919	98	23	2	10	3	4	—	10	2	1	11	11	—	1	1	19
1920-1929	80	21	—	5	8	5	—	13	1	2	4	8	1	—	2	10
1930-1939	40	8	—	2	1	2	—	3	3	1	3	6	—	—	2	9
Totals ...	1362	365	50	70	88	92	6	81	45	29	139	82	11	7	28	269

\* Purely religious bodies are excluded ; so too are branches of parent organisations.



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